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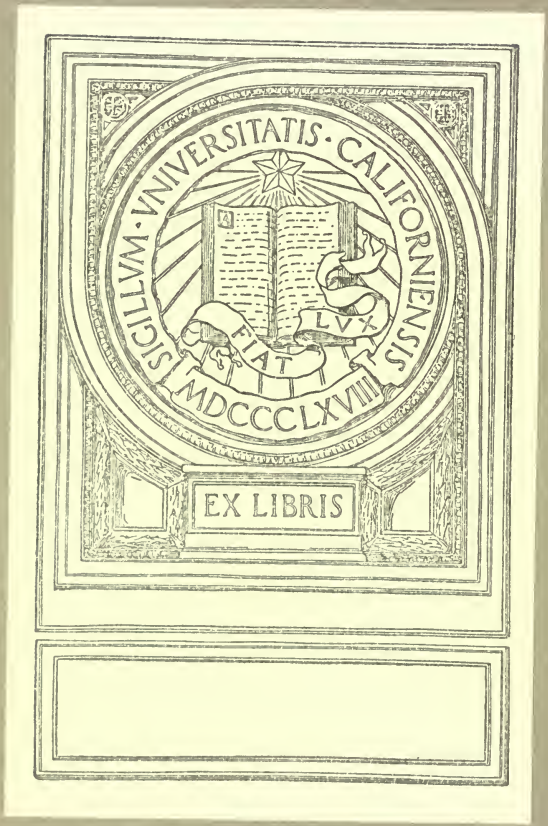
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Washington Irving.

MR. BRYANT'S ADDRESS ON HIS LIFE AND GENIUS.

ADDRESSES BY EVERETT, BANCROFT, LONGFELLOW, FELTON, ASPINWALL, KING, FRANCIS, GREENE.

MR. ALLIBONE'S SKETCH OF HIS LIFE AND WORKS.

WITH EIGHT PHOTOGRAPHS.

NEW YORK: G. P. PUTNAM.
1860.

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1860, by

G. P. PUTNAM,

in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the Southern District of New York.

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LIFE, CHARACTER AND GENIUS

OF

WASHINGTON IRVING.

BY WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

SUNNYSIDE—FROM A LARGE PHOTOGRAPH
By A. A. Turner.

A DISCOURSE

ON THE

LIFE, CHARACTER AND GENIUS

OF

WASHINGTON IRVING,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE NEW YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY,
AT THE ACADEMY OF MUSIC IN NEW YORK,
ON THE 3D OF APRIL, 1860.

BY

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

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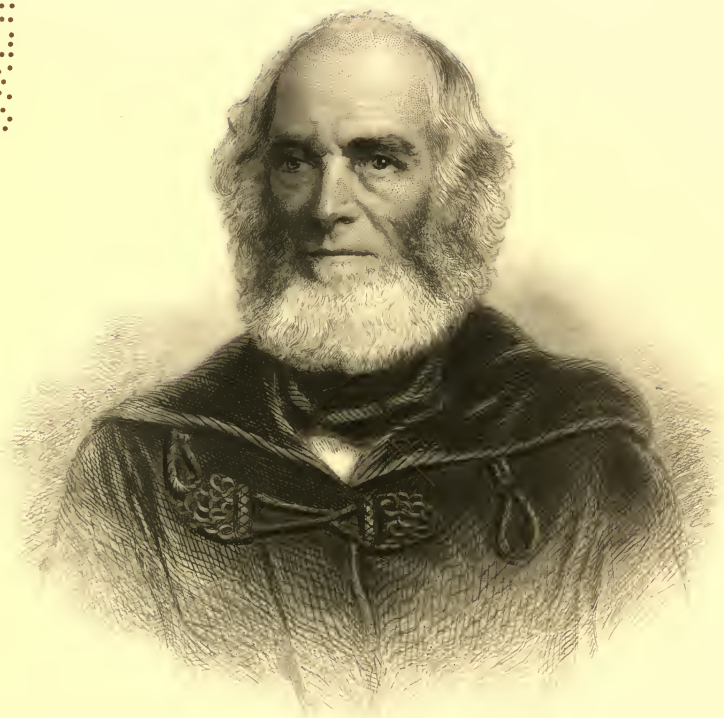

William Cullen Bryant

A DISCOURSE

ON THE LIFE, CHARACTER, AND GENIUS OF WASHINGTON IRVING,
DELIVERED BEFORE THE NEW YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY,
AT THE ACADEMY OF MUSIC, IN NEW YORK,
ON THE 3D OF APRIL, 1860,

BY WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

WE have come together, my friends, on the birthday of an illustrious citizen of our republic, but so recent is his departure from among us, that our assembling is rather an expression of sorrow for his death than of congratulation that such a man was born into the world. His admirable writings, the beautiful products of his peculiar genius, remain, to be the enjoyment of the present and future generations. We keep the recollection of his amiable and blameless life, and his kindly manners, and for these we give thanks ; but the thought will force itself upon us that the light of his friendly eye is quenched, that we must no more hear his beloved voice, nor take his welcome hand. It is as if some genial year had just closed and left us in frost and gloom; its flowery spring, its leafy summer, its plenteous autumn, flown, never to return. Its gifts are strewn around us ; its harvests are in our garners; but its season of bloom, and warmth,

and fruitfulness is past. We look around us and see that the sunshine, which filled the golden ear and tinged the reddening apple, brightens the earth no more.

Twelve years since, the task was assigned me to deliver the funeral eulogy of Thomas Cole, the great father of landscape painting in America, the artist who first taught the pencil to portray, with the boldness of nature, our wild forests and lake shores, our mountain regions and the borders of our majestic rivers. Five years later I was bidden to express, in such terms as I could command, the general sorrow which was felt for the death of Fenimore Cooper, equally great and equally the leader of his countrymen in a different walk of creative genius. Another grave has been opened, and he who has gone down to it, earlier than they in his labors and his fame, was, like them, foremost in the peculiar walk to which his genius attracted him. Cole was taken from us in the zenith of his manhood ; Cooper, when the sun of life had stooped from its meridian. In both instances the day was darkened by the cloud of death before the natural hour of its close ; but Irving was permitted to behold its light until, in the fulness of time and by the ordinary appointment of nature, it was carried below the horizon.

Washington Irving was born in New York, on the third of April, 1783, but a few days after the news of the treaty with Great Britain, acknowledging our independence, had been received, to the great contentment of the people. He opened his eyes to the light, therefore, just in the dawn of that Sabbath of peace which brought rest to the land after a weary seven years' war—just as the city of which he was a native, and the republic of which he was yet to be the ornament, were entering upon a career of greatness and prosperity of which those who inhabited them could scarce have dreamed. It seems fitting that one of

the first births of the new peace, so welcome to the country, should be that of a genius as kindly and fruitful as peace itself, and destined to make the world better and happier by its gentle influences. In one respect, those who were born at that time had the advantage of those who are educated under the more vulgar influences of the present age. Before their eyes were placed, in the public actions of the men who achieved our revolution, noble examples of steady rectitude, magnanimous self-denial, and cheerful self-sacrifice for the sake of their country. Irving came into the world when these great and virtuous men were in the prime of their manhood, and passed his youth in the midst of that general reverence which gathered round them as they grew old.

William Irving, the father of the great author, was a native of Scotland—one of a race in which the instinct of veneration is strong—and a Scottish woman was employed as a nurse in his household. It is related that one day while she was walking in the street with her little charge, then five years old, she saw General Washington in a shop, and, entering, led up the boy, whom she presented as one to whom his name had been given. The general turned, laid his hand on the child's head, and gave him his smile and his blessing, little thinking that they were bestowed upon his future biographer. The gentle pressure of that hand Irving always remembered, and that blessing, he believed, attended him through life. Who shall say what power that recollection may have had in keeping him true to high and generous aims?

At the time that Washington Irving was born, the city of New York contained scarcely more than twenty thousand inhabitants. During the war its population had probably diminished. The town was scarcely built up to Warren street;

Broadway, a little beyond, was lost among grassy pastures and tilled fields; the Park, in which now stands our City Hall, was an open common, and beyond it gleamed, in a hollow among the meadows, a little sheet of fresh water, the Kolch, from which a sluggish rivulet stole through the low grounds called Lispenard's Meadows, and following the course of what is now Canal street, entered the Hudson. With the exception of the little corner of the island below the present City Hall, the rural character of the whole region was unchanged, and the fresh air of the country entered New York at every street. The town at that time contained a mingled population, drawn from different countries; but the descendants of the old Dutch settlers formed a large proportion of the inhabitants, and these preserved many of their peculiar customs, and had not ceased to use the speech of their ancestors at their firesides. Many of them lived in the quaint old houses, built of small yellow bricks from Holland, with their notched gable-ends on the streets, which have since been swept away with the language of those who built them.

In the surrounding country, along its rivers and beside its harbors, and in many parts far inland, the original character of the Dutch settlements was still less changed. Here they read their Bibles and said their prayers and listened to sermons in the ancestral tongue. Remains of this language yet linger in a few neighborhoods; but in most, the common schools, and the irruptions of the Yankee race, and the growth of a population newly derived from Europe, have stifled the ancient utterances of New Amsterdam. I remember that twenty years since the market people of Bergen chattered Dutch in the steamers which brought them in the early morning to New York. I remember also that, about ten years before, there were families in the westernmost towns of Massachusetts where Dutch was still the

household tongue, and matrons of the English stock, marrying into them, were laughed at for speaking it so badly.

It will be readily inferred that the isolation in which the use of a language, strange to the rest of the country, placed these people, would form them to a character of peculiar simplicity, in which there was a great deal that was quaint and not a little that would appear comic to their neighbors of the Anglo-Saxon stock. It was among such a population, friendly and hospitable, wearing their faults on the outside, and living in homely comfort on their fertile and ample acres, that the boyhood and early youth of Irving were passed. He began, while yet a stripling, to wander about the surrounding country, for the love of rambling was the most remarkable peculiarity of that period of his life. He became, as he himself writes, familiar with all the neighboring places famous in history or fable, knew every spot where a murder or a robbery had been committed or a ghost seen ; strolled into the villages, noted their customs and talked with their sages, a welcome guest, doubtless, with his kindly and ingenuous manners and the natural playful turn of his conversation.

I dwell upon these particulars because they help to show here how the mind of Irving was trained, and by what process he made himself master of the materials afterward wrought into the forms we so much admire. It was in these rambles that his strong love of nature was awakened and nourished. Those who only know the island of New York as it now is, see few traces of the beauty it wore before it was levelled and smoothed from side to side for the builder. Immediately without the little town, it was charmingly diversified with heights and hollows, groves alternating with sunny openings, shining tracks of rivulets, quiet country-seats with trim gardens, broad avenues of

trees, and lines of pleached hawthorn hedges. I came to New York in 1825, and I well recollect how much I admired the shores of the Hudson above Canal street, where the dark rocks jutted far out in the water, with little bays between, above which drooped forest trees overrun with wild vines. No less beautiful were the shores of the East River, where the orchards of the Stuyvesant estate reached to cliffs beetling over the water, and still further on were inlets between rocky banks bristling with red cedars. Some idea of this beauty may be formed from looking at what remains of the natural shore of New York island where the tides of the East River rush to and fro by the rocky verge of Jones's Wood.

Here wandered Irving in his youth, and allowed the aspect of that nature which he afterward portrayed so well to engrave itself on his heart ; but his excursions were not confined to this island. He became familiar with the banks of the Hudson, the extraordinary beauty of which he was the first to describe. He made acquaintance with the Dutch neighborhoods sheltered by its hills, Nyack, Haverstraw, Sing Sing and Sleepy Hollow, and with the majestic Highlands beyond. His rambles in another direction led him to ancient Communipaw, lying in its quiet recess by New York bay ; to the then peaceful Gowanus, now noisy with the passage of visitors to Greenwood and thronged with funerals ; to Hoboken, Horsimus and Paulus Hook, which has since become a city. A ferry-boat dancing on the rapid tides took him over to Brooklyn, now our flourishing and beautiful neighbor city ; then a cluster of Dutch farms, whose possessors lived in broad, low houses, with stoops in front, overshadowed by trees.

The generation with whom Irving grew up read the "Spectator" and the "Rambler," the essays and tales of Mackenzie and

those of Goldsmith ; the novels of the day were those of Richardson, Fielding and Smollett ; the religious world were occupied with the pages of Hannah More, fresh from the press, and with the writings of Doddridge ; politicians sought their models of style and reasoning in the speeches of Burke and the writings of Mackintosh and Junius. These were certainly masters of whom no pupil needed to be ashamed, but it can hardly be said that the style of Irving was formed in the school of any of them. His father's library was enriched with authors of the Elizabethan age, and he delighted, we are told, in reading Chaucer and Spenser. The elder of these great poets might have taught him the art of heightening his genial humor with poetic graces, and from both he might have learned a freer mastery over his native English than the somewhat formal taste of that day encouraged. Cowper's poems, at that time, were in everybody's hands, and if his father had not those of Burns, we must believe that he was no Scotchman. I think we may fairly infer that if the style of Irving took a bolder range than was allowed in the way of writing which prevailed when he was a youth, it was owing, in a great degree, to his studies in the poets, and especially in those of the earlier English literature.

He owed little to the schools, though he began to attend them early. His first instructions were given when he was between four and six years old, by Mrs. Ann Kilmaster, at her school in Ann street, who seems to have had some difficulty in getting him through the alphabet. In 1789, he was transferred to a school in Fulton street, then called Partition street, kept by Benjamin Romaine, who had been a soldier in the Revolution —a sensible man and a good disciplinarian, but probably an indifferent scholar—and here he continued till he was fourteen years of age. He was a favorite with the master, but preferred

reading to regular study. At ten years of age he delighted in the wild tales of Ariosto, as translated by Hoole ; at eleven, he was deep in books of voyages and travels, which he took to school and read by stealth. At that time he composed with remarkable ease and fluency, and exchanged tasks with the other boys, writing their compositions, while they solved his problems in arithmetic, which he detested. At the age of thirteen he tried his hand at composing a play, which was performed by children at a friend's house, and of which he afterward forgot every part, even the title.

Romaine gave up teaching in 1797, and in that year Irving entered a school kept in Beekman street, by Jonathan Irish, probably the most accomplished of his instructors. He left this school in March, 1798, but continued for a time to receive private lessons from the same teacher, at home. Dr. Francis, in his pleasant reminiscences of Irving's early life, speaks of him as preparing to enter Columbia College, and as being prevented by the state of his health ; but it is certain that an indifference to the acquisition of learning had taken possession of him at that age, which he afterward greatly regretted.

At the age of sixteen he entered his name as a student at law in the office of Josiah Ogden Hoffman, an eminent advocate, who, in later life, became a judge in one of our principal tribunals. It was while engaged in his professional studies that he made his first appearance as an author. I should have mentioned, among the circumstances that favored the unfolding of his literary capacities, that two of his elder brothers were men of decided literary tastes, William Irving, some seventeen years his senior, and Dr. Peter Irving, who, in the year 1802, founded a daily paper in New York, at a time when a daily paper was not, as now, an enterprise requiring a large outlay of capital,

but an experiment that might be tried and abandoned with little risk. Dr. Irving established the "Morning Chronicle," and his younger brother contributed a series of essays, bearing the signature of Jonathan Oldstyle, of which Mr. Duyckinck, whose judgment I willingly accept, says that they show how early he acquired the style which so much charms us in his later writings.

In 1804, having reached the age of twenty-one, Irving, alarmed by an increasing weakness of the chest, visited Europe for the sake of his health. He sailed directly to the south of France, landed at Bordeaux in May, and passed two months in Genoa, where he embarked for Messina, in search of a softer climate than any to be found on the Italian peninsula. While at Messina, he saw the fleet of Nelson sweeping by that port on its way to fight the great naval battle of Trafalgar. He made the tour of Sicily, and crossing from Palermo to Naples, proceeded to Rome. Here he formed the acquaintance of Washington Allston, who was then entering on a career of art as extraordinary as that of Irving in literature. With Allston he made long rambles in the picturesque neighborhood of that old city, visited the galleries of its palaces and villas, and studied their works of art with a delight that rose to enthusiasm. He thought of the dry pursuit of the law which awaited his return to America, and for which he had no inclination, and almost determined to be a painter. Allston encouraged him in this disposition, and together they planned the scheme of a life devoted to the pursuit of art. It was fortunate for the world that, as Irving reflected on the matter, doubts arose in his mind which tempered his enthusiasm, and led him to a different destiny. The two friends separated, each to take his own way to renown—Allston to become one of the greatest of painters, and Irving to

take his place among the greatest of authors. Leaving Italy, Irving passed through Switzerland to France, resided in Paris several months, travelled through Flanders and Holland, went to England, and returned to his native country in 1806, after an absence of two years.

At the close of the year he was admitted to practice as an attorney-at-law. He opened an office, but it could not be said that he ever became a practitioner. He began the year 1807 with the earliest of those literary labors which have won him the admiration of the world. On the 24th of January appeared, in the form of a small pamphlet, the first number of a periodical entitled "Salmagundi," the joint production of himself, his brother William, and James K. Paulding. The elder brother contributed the poetry, with hints and outlines for some of the essays, but nearly all the prose was written by the two younger associates.

William Irving, however, had talent enough to have taken a more important part in the work. He was a man of wit, well educated, well informed, and the author of many clever things written for the press, in a vein of good natured satire and published without his name. He was held in great esteem on account of his personal character, and had great weight in Congress, of which he was for some years a member.*

When "Salmagundi" appeared, the quaint old Dutch town in which Irving was born had become transformed to a comparatively gay metropolis. Its population of twenty thousand souls had enlarged to more than eighty thousand, although its aristocratic class had yet their residences in what seems now to us the narrow space between the Battery and Wall street. The

* See a brief but well written memoir of William Irving by Dr. Berrian.

modes and fashions of Europe were imported fresh and fresh. "Salmagundi" speaks of leather breeches as all the rage for a morning dress, and flesh-colored smalls for an evening party. Gay equipages dashed through the streets. A new theatre had risen in Park Row, on the boards of which Cooper, one of the finest declaimers, was performing to crowded houses. The churches had multiplied faster than the places of amusement; other public buildings of a magnificence hitherto unknown, including our present City Hall, had been erected; Tammany Hall, fresh from the hands of the builder, overlooked the Park. We began to affect a taste for pictures, and the rooms of Michael Paff, the famous German picture dealer in Broadway, were a favorite lounge for such connoisseurs as we then had, who amused themselves with making him talk of Michael Angelo. Ballston Springs were the great fashionable watering-place of the country, to which resorted the planters of the South with splendid equipages and troops of shining blacks in livery.

"Salmagundi" satirized the follies and ridiculed the humors of the time with great prodigality of wit and no less exuberance of good nature. In form it resembles the "Tattler," and that numerous brood of periodical papers to which the success of the "Tattler" and "Spectator" gave birth; but it is in no sense an imitation. Its gaiety is its own; its style of humor is not that of Addison nor Goldsmith, though it has all the genial spirit of theirs; nor is it borrowed from any other writer. It is far more frolicsome and joyous, yet tempered by a native gracefulness. "Salmagundi" was manifestly written without the fear of criticism before the eyes of the authors, and to this sense of perfect freedom in the exercise of their genius the charm is probably owing which makes us still read it with so much delight. Irving never seemed to place much value on the part he contributed to this

work, yet I doubt whether he ever excelled some of those papers in *Salmagundi* which bear the most evident marks of his style, and Paulding, though he has since acquired a reputation by his other writings, can hardly be said to have written anything better than the best of those which are ascribed to his pen.

Just before *Salmagundi* appeared, several of the authors who gave the literature of England its present character had begun to write. For five years the quarterly issues of the "Edinburgh Review," then in the most brilliant period of its existence, had been before the public. Hazlitt had taken his place among the authors, and John Foster had published his essays. Of the poets, Rogers, Campbell and Moore were beginning to be popular; Wordsworth had published his Lyrical Ballads, Scott, his Lay of the Last Ministrel, Southey, his Madoc, and Joanna Baillie two volumes of her plays. In this revival of the creative power in literature it is pleasant to see that our own country took part, contributing a work of a character as fresh and original as any they produced on the other side of the Atlantic.

Nearly two years afterward, in the autumn of 1809, appeared in the "Evening Post," addressed to the humane, an advertisement requesting information concerning a small elderly gentleman named Knickerbocker, dressed in a black coat and cocked hat, who had suddenly left his lodgings at the Columbian Hotel in Mulberry street, and had not been heard of afterward. In the beginning of November, a "Traveller" communicated to the same journal the information that he had seen a person answering to this description, apparently fatigued with his journey, resting by the road-side a little north of Kingsbridge. Ten days later Seth Handaside, the landlord of the Columbian Hotel, gave notice, through the same journal, that he had found in the missing gentleman's chamber "a curious kind

WASHINGTON IRVING, FROM THE PICTURE BY JARVIS,
1809—æt. 27.

of written book," which he should print by way of reimbursing himself for what his lodger owed him. In December following, Inskeep and Bradford, booksellers, published "Diedrich Knickerbocker's History of New York."

"Salmagundi" had prepared the public to receive this work with favor, and Seth Handaside had no reason to regret having undertaken its publication. I recollect well its early and immediate popularity. I was then a youth in college, and having committed to memory a portion of it to repeat as a declamation before my class, I was so overcome with laughter, when I appeared on the floor, that I was unable to proceed, and drew upon myself the rebuke of the tutor.

I have just read this "History of New York" over again, and I found myself no less delighted than when I first turned its pages in my early youth. When I compare it with other works of wit and humor of a similar length, I find that, unlike most of them, it carries forward the reader to the conclusion without weariness or satiety, so unsought, spontaneous, self-suggested are the wit and the humor. The author makes us laugh, because he can no more help it than we can help laughing. Scott, in one of his letters, compared the humor of this work to that of Swift. The rich vein of Irving's mirth is of a quality quite distinct from the dry drollery of Swift, but they have this in common, that they charm by the utter absence of effort, and this was probably the ground of Scott's remark. A critic in the "London Quarterly," some years after its appearance, spoke of it as a "tantalizing book," on account of his inability to understand what he called "the point of many of the allusions in this political satire." I fear he must have been one of those respectable persons who find it difficult to understand a joke unless it be accompanied with a commentary opening and explaining it

to the humblest capacity. Scott found no such difficulty. "Our sides," he says, in a letter to Mr. Brevoort, a friend of Irving, written just after he had read the book, "are absolutely sore with laughing." The mirth of the "History of New York" is of the most transparent sort, and the author, even in the later editions, judiciously abstained from any attempt to make it more intelligible by notes.

I find in this work more manifest traces than in his other writings of what Irving owed to the earlier authors in our language. The quaint poetic coloring, and often the phraseology, betray the disciple of Chaucer and Spenser. We are conscious of a flavor of the olden time, as of a racy wine of some rich vintage—

"Cooled a long age in the deep-delvèd earth.

I will not say that there are no passages in this work which are not worthy of their context; that we do not sometimes meet with phraseology which we could wish changed, that the wit does not sometimes run wild and drop here and there a jest which we could willingly spare. We forgive, we overlook, we forget all this as we read, in consideration of the entertainment we have enjoyed, and of that which beckons us onward in the next page. Of all mock-heroic works, "Knickerbocker's History of New York" is the gayest, the airiest, and the least tiresome.

In 1848 Mr. Irving issued an edition of this work, to which he prefixed what he called an "Apology," intended in part as an answer to those who thought he had made too free with the names of our old Dutch families. To speak frankly, I do not much wonder that the descendants of the original founders of New Amsterdam should have hardly known whether to laugh

or look grave on finding the names of their ancestors, of whom they never thought but with respect, now connected with ludicrous associations, by a wit of another race. In one of his excellent historical discourses Mr. Verplanck had gently complained of this freedom, expressing himself, as he said, more in sorrow than in anger. Even the sorrow, I believe, must have long since wholly passed away, when it is seen how little Irving's pleasantries have detracted from the honor paid to the early history of our city—at all events, I do not see how it could survive Irving's good-humored and graceful Apology.

It was not long after the publication of the "History of New York" that Irving abandoned the profession of law, for which he had so decided a distaste as never to have fully tried his capacity for pursuing it. Two of his brothers were engaged in commerce, and they received him as a silent partner. He did not, however, renounce his literary occupations. He wrote, in 1810, a memoir of Campbell, the poet, prefaced to an edition of the writings of that author, which appeared in Philadelphia; and in 1813 and the following year, employed himself as editor of the "Analectic Magazine," published in the same city; making the experiment of his talent for a vocation to which men of decided literary tastes in this country are strongly inclined to betake themselves. Those who remember this magazine cannot have forgotten that it was a most entertaining miscellany, partly compiled from English publications, mostly periodicals, and partly made up of contributions of some of our own best writers. Paulding wrote for it a series of biographical accounts of the naval commanders of the United States, which added greatly to its popularity; and Verplanck contributed memoirs of Commodore Stewart and General Scott, Barlow, the poet, and other distinguished Americans, which were received with favor.

The Life of Campbell, with the exception perhaps of some less important contributions to the magazine, is the only published work of Irving between the appearance of the "History of New York," in 1809, and that of the "Sketch Book," in 1819.

It was during this interval that an event took place which had a marked influence on Irving's future life, affected the character of his writings, and, now that the death of both parties allow it to be spoken of without reserve, gives a peculiar interest to his personal history. He became attached to a young lady whom he was to have married. She died unwedded, in the flower of her age; there was a sorrowful leave-taking between her and her lover, as the grave was about to separate them on the eve of what should have been her bridal; and Irving, ever after, to the close of his life, tenderly and faithfully cherished her memory. In one of the biographical notices published immediately after Irving's death, an old, well-worn copy of the Bible is spoken of, which was kept lying on the table in his chamber, within reach of his bedside, bearing her name on the title page in a delicate female hand—a relic which we may presume to have been his constant companion. Those who are fond of searching, in the biographies of eminent men, for the circumstances which determined the bent of their genius, find in this sad event, and the cloud it threw over the hopeful and cheerful period of early manhood, an explanation of the transition from the unbounded playfulness of the "History of New York" to the serious, tender and meditative vein of the "Sketch Book."

In 1815, soon after our second peace with Great Britain, Irving sailed again for Europe, and fixed himself at Liverpool, where a branch of the large commercial house to which he belonged was established. His old love of rambling returned upon

him ; he wandered first into Wales, and over some of the finest counties of England, and then northward to the sterner region of the Scottish Highlands. His memoir of Campbell had procured him the acquaintance and friendship of that poet. Campbell gave him, more than a year after his arrival in England, a letter of introduction to Scott, who, already acquainted with him by his writings, welcomed him warmly to Abbotsford, and made him his friend for life. Scott sent a special message to Campbell, thanking him for having made him known to Irving. "He is one of the best and pleasantest acquaintances," said Scott, "that I have made this many a day."

In the same year that he visited Abbotsford his brothers failed. The changes which followed the peace of 1815, swept away their fortunes and his together, and he was now to begin the world anew.

In 1819, he began to publish the Sketch Book. It was written in England and sent over to New York, where it was issued by Van Winkle, in octavo numbers, containing from seventy to a hundred pages. In the preface he remarked that he was "unsettled in his abode," that he had "his cares and vicissitudes," and could not, therefore, give these papers the "tranquil attention necessary to finished composition." Several of them were copied with praise in the London "Literary Gazette," and an intimation was conveyed to the author, that some person in London was about to publish them entire. He preferred to do this himself, and accordingly offered the work to the famous bookseller, Murray. Murray was slow in giving the matter his attention, and Irving, after a reasonable delay, wrote to ask that the copy which he had left with him might be returned. It was sent back with a note, pleading excess of occupation, the great cross of all eminent booksellers, and alleging the "want

of scope in the nature of the work," as a reason for declining it. This was discouraging, but Irving had the enterprise to print the first volume in London, at his own risk. It was issued by John Miller, and was well received, but in a month afterward the publisher failed. Immediately Sir Walter Scott came to London and saw Murray, who allowed himself to be persuaded, the more easily, doubtless, on account of the partial success of the first volume, that the work had more "scope" than he supposed, and purchased the copyright of both volumes for two hundred pounds, which he afterward liberally raised to four hundred.

Whoever compares the Sketch Book with the History of New York might at first, perhaps, fail to recognize it as the work of the same hand, so much graver and more thoughtful is the strain in which it is written. A more attentive examination, however, shows that the humor in the lighter parts is of the same peculiar and original cast, wholly unlike that of any author who ever wrote, a humor which Mr. Dana happily characterized as "a fanciful playing with common things, and here and there beautiful touches, till the ludicrous becomes half picturesque." Yet one cannot help perceiving that the author's spirit had been sobered since he last appeared before the public, as if the shadow of a great sorrow had fallen upon it. The greater number of the papers are addressed to our deeper sympathies, and some of them, as, for example, the Broken Heart, the Widow and Her Son, and Rural Funerals, dwell upon the saddest themes. Only in two of them—Rip Van Winkle and the Legend of Sleepy Hollow—does he lay the reins loose on the neck of his frolicsome fancy, and allow it to dash forward without restraint; and these rank among the most delightful and popular tales ever written. In our country they have been read, I believe, by nearly everybody who can read at all.

WASHINGTON IRVING—FROM THE PICTURE BY STUART NEWTON.
1820—æt. 37.

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The "Sketch Book," and the two succeeding works of Irving, "Bracebridge Hall" and the "Tales of a Traveller," abound with agreeable pictures of English life, seen under favorable lights and sketched with a friendly pencil. Let me say here, that it was not to pay court to the English that he thus described them and their country ; it was because he could not describe them otherwise. It was the instinct of his mind to attach itself to the contemplation of the good and the beautiful, wherever he found them, and to turn away from the sight of what was evil, misshapen and hateful. His was not a nature to pry for faults, or disabuse the world of good-natured mistakes ; he looked for virtue, love and truth among men, and thanked God that he found them in such large measure. If there are touches of satire in his writings, he is the best-natured and most amiable of satirists, amiable beyond Horace ; and in his irony—for there is a vein of playful irony running through many of his works—there is no tinge of bitterness.

I rejoice, for my part, that we have had such a writer as Irving to bridge over the chasm between the two great nations —that an illustrious American lived so long in England, and was so much beloved there, and sought so earnestly to bring the people of the two countries to a better understanding with each other, and to wean them from the animosities of narrow minds. I am sure that there is not a large-minded and large-hearted man in all our country who can read over the "Sketch Book" and the other writings of Irving, and disown one of the magnanimous sentiments they express with regard to England, or desire to abate the glow of one of his warm and cheerful pictures of English life. Occasions will arise, no doubt, for saying some things in a less accommodating spirit, and there are men enough on both sides of the Atlantic who can say them ; but

Irving was not sent into the world on that errand. A different work was assigned him in the very structure of his mind, and the endowments of his heart—a work of peace and brotherhood, and I will say for him that he nobly performed it.

Let me pause here to speak of what I believe to have been the influence of the "Sketch Book" upon American literature. At the time it appeared the periodical lists of new American publications were extremely meagre, and consisted, to a great extent, of occasional pamphlets and dissertations on the questions of the day. The works of greater pretension were, for the most part, crudely and languidly made up, and destined to be little read. A work like the "Sketch Book," welcomed on both sides of the Atlantic, showed the possibility of an American author acquiring a fame bounded only by the limits of his own language, and gave an example of the qualities by which it might be won. Within two years afterward we had Cooper's "Spy" and Dana's "Idle Man;" the press of our country began, by degrees, to teem with works composed with a literary skill and a spirited activity of intellect until then little known among us. Every year the assertion that we had no literature of our own became less and less true: and now, when we look over a list of new works by native authors, we find, with an astonishment amounting almost to alarm, that the most voracious devourer of books must despair of being able to read half those which make a fair claim upon his attention. It was since 1819 that the great historians of our country, whose praise is in the mouths of all the nations, began to write. One of them built up the fabric of his fame long after Irving appeared as an author, and slept with Herodotus two years before Irving's death; another of the band lives yet to be the ornament of the association before which I am called to speak, and is framing

Yours Faithfully

Washington Irving

From Portrait by Gilbert Stuart Newton, in the possession of John Murray, Esq., London.

the annals of his country into a work for future ages. Within that period has arisen among us the class who hold vast multitudes spell-bound in motionless attention by public discourses, the most perfect of their kind, such as make the fame of Everett. Within that period our theologians have learned to write with the elegance and vivacity of the essayists. We had but one novelist before the era of the "Sketch Book;" their number is now beyond enumeration by any but a professed catalogue-maker, and many of them are read in every cultivated form of human speech. Those whom we acknowledge as our poets—one of whom is the special favorite of our brothers in language who dwell beyond sea—appeared in the world of letters and won its attention after Irving had become famous. We have wits, and humorists, and amusing essayists, authors of some of the airiest and most graceful compositions of the present century, and we owe them to the new impulse given to our literature in 1819. I look abroad on these stars of our literary firmament—some crowded together with their minute points of light in a galaxy—some standing apart in glorious constellations; I recognize Arcturus, and Orion, and Perseus, and the glittering jewels of the Southern Crown, and the Pleiades shedding sweet influences; but the Evening Star, the soft and serene light that glowed in their van, the precursor of them all, has sunk below the horizon. The spheres, meantime, perform their appointed courses; the same motion which lifted them up to the mid-sky bears them onward to their setting; and they, too, like their bright leader, must soon be carried by it below the earth.

Irving went to Paris in 1820, where he passed the remainder of the year and part of the next, and where he became acquainted with the poet Moore, who frequently mentions him

in his Diary. Moore and he were much in each other's company and the poet has left on record an expression of his amazement at the rapidity with which "Bracebridge Hall" was composed—one hundred and thirty pages in ten days. The winter of 1822 found him in Dresden. In that year was published "Bracebridge Hall," the groundwork of which is a charming description of country life in England, interspersed with narratives, the scene of which is laid in other countries. Of these, the Norman tale of "Annette Delarbre" seems to me the most beautiful and affecting thing of its kind in all his works; so beautiful, indeed, that I can hardly see how he who has once read it can resist the desire to read it again. In "Bracebridge Hall" we have the Stout Gentleman, full of certain minute paintings of familiar objects, where not a single touch is thrown in that does not heighten the comic effect of the narrative. If I am not greatly mistaken, the most popular novelists of the day have learned from this pattern the skill with which they have wrought up some of their most striking passages, both grave and gay. In composing "Bracebridge Hall," Irving showed that he had not forgotten his native country; and in the pleasant tale of Dolph Heyleger he went back to the banks of that glorious river beside which he was born.

In 1823, Irving, still a wanderer, returned to Paris, and in the year following gave the world his "Tales of a Traveller." Murray, in the meantime, had become fully weaned from the notion that Irving's writings lacked the quality which he called "scope," for he had paid a thousand guineas for the copyright of "Bracebridge Hall," and now offered fifteen hundred pounds for the "Tales of a Traveller," which Irving accepted. "He might have had two thousand," says Moore, but this assembly will not, I hope, think the worse of him, if it be acknowledged that

the world contained men who were sharper than he at driving a bargain. The "Tales of a Traveller" are most remarkable for their second part, entitled "Buckthorne and his Friends," in which the author introduces us to literary life in its various aspects, as he had observed it in London, and to the relations in which authors at that time stood to the booksellers. His sketches of the different personages are individual, characteristic and diverting, yet with what a kindly pencil they are all drawn! His good nature overspreads and harmonizes everything, like the warm atmosphere which so much delights us in a painting.

Irving, still "unsettled in his abode," passed the winter of 1825 in the south of France. When you are in that region you see the snowy summits of the Spanish Pyrenees looking down upon you ; Spanish visitors frequent the watering-places ; Spanish pedlers, in their handsome costume, offer you the fabrics of Barcelona and Valencia ; Spanish peasants come to the fairs ; the traveller feels himself almost in Spain already, and is haunted by the desire of visiting that remarkable country. To Spain, Irving went in the latter part of the year, invited by our Minister at Madrid, Alexander H. Everett, at the suggestion of Mr. Rich, the American Consul, an industrious and intelligent collector of Spanish works relating to America. His errand was to translate into English the documents relating to the discovery and early history of our Continent, collected by the research of Navarrete. He passed the winter of 1826 at the Spanish capital, as the guest of Mr. Rich ; the following season took him to Granada, and he lingered awhile in that beautiful region, profusedly watered by the streams that break from the Snowy Ridge. In 1827, he again visited the South of Spain, gathering materials for his "Life of Columbus," which, immediately after his arrival in Spain, he had determined to write,

instead of translating the documents of Navarrete. In Spain he began and finished that work, after having visited the places associated with the principal events in the life of his hero. Murray was so well satisfied with its "scope" that he gave him three thousand guineas for the copyright, and laid it before the public in 1828. Like the other works of Irving's, it was published here at the same time as in London.

The "Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus" placed Irving among the historians, for the biography of that great discoverer is a part, and a remarkable part, of the history of the world. Of what was strictly and simply personal in his adventures, much, of course, has passed into irremediable oblivion; what was both personal and historical is yet outstanding above the shadow that has settled upon the rest. The work of Irving was at once in everybody's hands and eagerly read. Navarrete vouched for its historical accuracy and completeness. Jeffrey declared that no work could ever take its place. It was written with a strong love of the subject, and to this it owes much of its power over the reader. Columbus was one of those who, with all their faculties occupied by one great idea, and bent on making it a practical reality, are looked upon as crazed, and pitied and forgotten if they fail, but if they succeed are venerated as the glory of their age. The poetic elements of his character and history, the grandeur and mystery of his design, his prophetic sagacity, his hopeful and devout courage, and his disregard of the ridicule of meaner intellects, took a strong hold on the mind of Irving, and formed the inspiration of the work.

Mr. Duyckinck gives, on the authority of one who knew Irving intimately, an instructive anecdote relating to the "Life of Columbus." When the work was nearly finished it was put into the hands of Lieutenant Slidell Mackenzie, himself an agree-

able writer, then on a visit to Spain, who read it with a view of giving a critical opinion of its merits. "It is quite perfect," said he, on returning the manuscript, "except the style, and that is unequal." The remark made such an impression on the mind of the author that he wrote over the whole narrative with the view of making the style more uniform, but he afterward thought that he had not improved it.

In this I have no doubt that Irving was quite right, and that it would have been better if he had never touched the work after he had brought it to the state which satisfied his individual judgment. An author can scarce commit a greater error than to alter what he writes, except when he has a clear perception that the alteration is for the better, and can make it with as hearty a confidence in himself as he felt in giving the work its first shape. What strikes me as an occasional defect in the "Life of Columbus" is this elaborate uniformity of style—a certain prismatic coloring in passages where absolute simplicity would have satisfied us better. It may well be supposed that Irving originally wrote some parts of the work with the quiet plainness of a calm relater of facts, and others, with the spirit and fire of one who had become warmed with his subject, and this probably gave occasion to what was said of the inequality of the style. The attempt to elevate the diction of the simpler portions, we may suppose, marred what Irving afterward perceived had really been one of the merits of the work.

In the spring of 1829, Irving made another visit to the south of Spain, collecting materials from which he afterward composed some of his most popular works. When the traveller now visits Granada and is taken to the Alhambra, his guide will say, "Here is one of the curiosities of the place; this is the chamber occupied by Washington Irving," and he will show an

apartment, from the windows of which you have a view of the glorious valley of the Genil, with the mountain peaks overlooking it, and hear the murmur of many mountain brooks at once, as they hurry to the plain. In July of the same year, he repaired to London, where he was to act as Secretary of the American Legation. We had at that time certain controversies with the British government which were the subject of negotiation. Irving took great interest in these, and in some letters which I saw at the time, stated the points in dispute at considerable length and with admirable method and perspicuity. In London he published his "Chronicles of the Conquest of Granada," one of the most delightful of his works, an exact history, for such it is admitted to be by those who have searched most carefully the ancient records of Spain, yet so full of personal incident, so diversified with surprising turns of fortune, and these wrought up with such picturesque effect, that, to use an expression of Pope, a young lady might read it by mistake for a romance. In 1831, he gave the world another work on Spanish history, the "Voyages of the Companions of Columbus," and in the year following the "Alhambra," which is another "Sketch Book," with the scenes laid in Spain.

While in Spain, Irving had planned a Life of Cortez, the Conqueror of Mexico, and collected the facts from which it was to be written. When, afterward, he had actually begun the composition of the work, he happened to learn that Prescott designed to write the "History of the Mexican Conquest," and immediately he desisted. It was his intention to interweave with the narrative, descriptions of the ancient customs of the aborigines, such as their modes of warfare and their gorgeous pageants, by way of relief to the sanguinary barbarities of the Conquest. He saw what rich materials of the picturesque these

opened to him, and if he had accomplished his plan, he would probably have produced one of his most popular works.

In 1832, Irving returned to New York. He returned, after an absence of seventeen years, to find his native city doubled in population ; its once quiet waters alive with sails and furrowed by steamers passing to and fro, its wharves crowded with masts ; the heights which surround it, and which he remembered wild and solitary and lying in forest, now crowned with stately country seats, or with dwellings clustered in villages, and everywhere the activity and bustle of a prosperous and hopeful people. And he, too, how had he returned? The young and comparatively obscure author, whose works had only found here and there a reader in England, had achieved a fame as wide as the civilized world. All the trophies he had won in this field he brought home to lay at the feet of his country. Meanwhile all the country was moved to meet him ; the rejoicing was universal that one who had represented us so illustriously abroad was henceforth to live among us.

Irving hated public dinners, but he was forced to accept one pressed upon him by his enthusiastic countrymen. It was given at the City Hotel on the 30th of May, Chancellor Kent presiding, and the most eminent citizens of New York assembled at the table. I remember the accounts of this festivity reaching me as I was wandering in Illinois, hovering on the skirts of the Indian war, in a region now populous, but then untilled and waste, and I could only write to Irving and ask leave to add my voice to the general acclamation. In his address at the dinner, Chancellor Kent welcomed the historian of New Amsterdam back to his native city, and Irving, in reply, poured forth his heart in the warmest expressions of delight at finding himself again among his countrymen and kindred, in a land of sunshine and freedom and

hope. "I am asked," he said, "how long I mean to remain here. They know little of my heart who can ask me this question. I answer, as long as I live."

The instinct of rambling, had not, however, forsaken him. In the summer after his return he made a journey to the country west of the Mississippi, in company with Mr. Ellsworth, a commissioner intrusted with the removal of certain Indian tribes, and roamed over wild regions, then the hunting-grounds of the savage, but into which the white man has since brought his plough and his herds. He did not publish his account of this journey until 1835, when it appeared as the first volume of the "Crayon Miscellany," under the title of a "Tour on the Prairies." In this work the original West is described as Irving knew how to describe it, and the narrative is in that vein of easy gaiety peculiar to his writings. "Abbotsford and Newstead Abbey" formed the second volume of the "Crayon Miscellany," and to these he afterward added another, entitled "Legends of the Conquest of Spain."

In 1836, he published "Astoria; or, Anecdotes of an Enterprise beyond the Rocky Mountains;" a somewhat curious example of literary skill. A voluminous commercial correspondence was the dull ore of the earth which he refined and wrought into symmetry and splendor. Irving reduced to a regular narrative the events to which it referred, bringing out the picturesque whenever he found it, and enlivening the whole with touches of his native humor. His nephew, Pierre M. Irving, lightened his labor materially by examining and collating the letters and making memoranda of their contents. In 1837, he prepared for the press the "Adventures of Captain Bonneville, of the United States Army, in the Rocky Mountains and the Far West." He had the manuscript journal of Bonne-

WASHINGTON IRVING—FROM THE BUST BY BALL HUGHES:
1835—æt. 52.

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ville before him, but the hand of Irving is apparent in every sentence.

About the time that this work appeared, Irving was drawn into the only public controversy in which, so far as I know, he ever engaged. William Leggett then conducted a weekly periodical entitled the "Plaindealer," remarkable both for its ability and its love of disputation. It attacked Mr. Irving for altering a line or two in one of my poems, with a view of making it less offensive to English readers, and for writing a preface to the American edition of his "Tour on the Prairies," full of professions of love for his country, which were studiously omitted from the English edition. From these circumstances the "Plaindealer" drew an inference unfavorable to Irving's sincerity.

I should here mention, and I hope I may do it without much egotism, that when a volume of my poems was published here in the year 1832, Mr. Verplanck had the kindness to send a copy of it to Irving, desiring him to find a publisher for it in England. This he readily engaged to do, though wholly unacquainted with me, and offered the volume to Murray. "Poetry does not sell at present," said Murray, and declined it. A bookseller in Bond street, named Andrews, undertook its publication, but required that Irving should introduce it with a preface of his own. He did so, speaking of my verses in such terms as would naturally command for them the attention of the public, and allowing his name to be placed in the title-page as the editor. The edition, in consequence, found a sale. It happened, however, that the publisher objected to two lines in a poem called the "Song of Marion's Men." One of them was

"The British soldier trembles,"

and Irving good-naturedly consented that it should be altered to

"The foeman trembles in his camp."

The other alteration was of a similar character.

To the accusations of the "Plaindealer," Irving replied with a mingled spirit and dignity which almost makes us regret that his faculties were not oftener roused into energy by such collisions, or, at least, that he did not sometimes employ his pen on controverted points. He fully vindicated himself in both instances, showing that he had made the alterations in my poem from a simple desire to do me service, and that with regard to the "Tour on the Prairies," he had sent a manuscript copy of it to England for publication, at the same time that he sent another to the printer here, and that it would have been an absurdity to address the English edition to the American public. But as this was the first time that he had appeared before his countrymen as an author since his return from Europe, it was but proper that he should express to them the feelings awakened by their generous welcome. "These feelings," he said, "were genuine, and were not expressed with half the warmth with which they were entertained;" an assertion which every reader, I believe, was disposed to receive literally.

In his answer to the "Plaindealer," some allusions were made to me which seemed to imply that I had taken part in this attack upon him. To remove the impression, I sent a note to the "Plaindealer" for publication, in which I declared in substance that I never had complained of the alterations of my poem—that though they were not such as I should have made, I was certain they were made with the kindest intentions, and that I had no feeling toward Mr. Irving but gratitude for the service he had rendered me. The explanation was graciously accepted, and in a brief note, printed in the "Plaindealer," Irving pronounced my acquittal.

WASHINGTON IRVING—FROM DRAWING FROM LIFE BY MARTIN.
1851—æt. 68.

Several papers were written by Irving in 1839 and the following year, for the "Knickerbocker," a monthly periodical conducted by his friend, Lewis Gaylord Clark, all of them such as he only could write. They were afterward collected into a volume, entitled "Wolfert's Roost," from the ancient name of that beautiful residence of his on the banks of the Hudson, in which they were mostly written. They were, perhaps, read with more interest in the volume than in the magazine, just as some paintings of the highest merit are seen with more pleasure in the artist's room than on the walls of an exhibition.

In 1842, he went to Spain as the American minister, and remained in that country for four years. I have never understood that anything occurred during that time to put his talents as a negotiator to any rigorous test. He was a sagacious and intelligent observer; his connection with the American Legation in London had given him diplomatic experience, and I have heard that he sent home to his government some valuable despatches on the subject of our relations with Spain. In other respects, he did, at least, what all American ministers at the European courts are doing, and I suppose my hearers understand very well what that is; but if there had been any question of importance to be settled, I think he might have acquitted himself as well as many who have had a higher reputation for dexterity in business. When I was at Madrid in 1857, a distinguished Spaniard said to me: "Why does not your government send out Washington Irving to this court? Why do you not take as your agent the man whom all Spain admires, venerates, loves? I assure you, it would be difficult for our government to refuse anything which Irving should ask, and his signature would make almost any treaty acceptable to our people."

Returning in 1846, Irving went back to Sunnyside, on the

Hudson, and continued to make it his abode for the rest of his life. Those who passed up and down the river before the year 1835, may remember a neglected cottage on a green bank, with a few locust-trees before it, close to where a little brook brings in its tribute to the mightier stream. In that year Irving became its possessor ; he gave it the name it now wears, planted its pleasant slopes with trees and shrubs, laid it out in walks, built outhouses, and converted the cottage into a more spacious dwelling, in the old Dutch style of architecture, with crow-steps on the gables ; a quaint, picturesque building, with "as many angles and corners," to use his own words, "as a cocked hat." He caused creeping plants and climbing roses to be trained up its walls ; the trees he planted prospered in that sheltered situation, and were filled with birds, which would not leave their nests at the approach of the kind master of the place. The house became almost hidden from sight by their lofty summits, the perpetual rustlings of which, to those who sat within, were blended with the murmurs of the water. Van Tassel would have had some difficulty in recognizing his old abode in this little paradise, with the beauty of which one of Irving's friends* has made the public familiar in prose and verse.

At Sunnyside, Irving wrote his "Life of Oliver Goldsmith." Putnam, the bookseller, had said to him one day : "Here is Foster's 'Life of Goldsmith ;' I think of republishing it." "I once wrote a Memoir of Goldsmith," answered Irving, "which was prefixed to an edition of his works printed at Paris ; and I have thought of enlarging it and making it more perfect." "If you will do that," was the reply of the bookseller, "I shall not republish the Life by Foster." Within three months afterward,

* H. T. Tuckerman.

BRYANT—WEBSTER—IRVING—
Sketched by Huntington at the Cooper Commemoration, 1852.

Irving's "Life of Goldsmith" was finished and in press. It was so much superior to the original sketch, in the exactness of the particulars, the entertainment of the anecdotes, and the beauty of the style, that it was really a new work. For my part, I know of nothing like it. I have read no biographical memoir which carries forward the reader so delightfully and with so little tediousness of recital or reflection. I never take it up without being tempted to wish that Irving had written more works of the kind; but this could hardly be ; for where could he have found another Goldsmith ?

In 1850, appeared his "Lives of Mahomet and his Successors," composed principally from memoranda made by him during his residence in Spain; and in the same year he completed the revisal of his works for a new edition, which was brought out by Putnam, a bookseller of whose obliging and honorable conduct he delighted to speak. Irving was a man with whom it was not easy to have a misunderstanding ; but, even if he had been of a different temper, these commendations would have been none the less deserved.

When Cooper died, toward the close of the year 1850, Irving, who had not long before met him, apparently in the full vigor of his excellent constitution, was much shocked by the event, and took part in the meetings held for the purpose of collecting funds to erect a monument to his memory in this city—a design which, I am sorry to say, has wholly failed. He wrote a letter advising that the monument should be a statue, and attended the great memorial meeting held in Metropolitan Hall, in February of the next year, at which Webster presided. He was then near the end of his sixty-eighth year, and was remarked as one over whom the last twenty years had passed lightly. He, whom Dr. Francis describes as in early life a slender and delicate

youth, preserving his health by habitual daily exercise, appeared before that vast assembly a fresh, well-preserved gentleman scarcely more than elderly, with firm but benevolent features, well-knit and muscular limbs, and an elastic step, the sign of undiminished physical vigor.

In his retirement at Sunnyside, Irving planned and executed his last great work, the "Life of Washington," to which he says he had long looked forward as his crowning literary effort. Constable, the Edinburgh bookseller, had proposed it to him thirty years before, and he then resolved to undertake it as soon as he should return to the United States. It was postponed in favor of other projects, but never abandoned. At length the expected time seemed to have arrived; his other tasks had been successfully performed; the world was waiting for new works from his pen; his mind and body were yet in their vigor; the habit and the love of literary production yet remained, and he addressed himself to this greatest of his labors.

Yet he had his misgivings, though they could not divert him from his purpose. "They expect too much—too much," he said to a friend of mine, to whom he was speaking of the magnitude of the task and the difficulty of satisfying the public. We cannot wonder at these doubts. At the time when he began to employ himself steadily on this work, he was near the age of threescore and ten, when with most men the season of hope and confidence is past. He was like one who should begin the great labor of the day when the sun was shedding his latest beams, and what if the shadows of night should descend upon him before his task was ended? A vast labor had been thrown upon him by the almost numberless documents and papers recently brought to light relating to the events in which Washington was concerned—such as were amassed and digested by the research

WASHINGTON IRVING—FROM DAGUERREOTYPE BY PLUMBE.
1849—æt. 66.

of Sparks, and accompanied by the commentary of his excellent biography. These were all to be carefully examined and their spirit extracted. Historians had in the meantime arisen in our country, of a world-wide fame, with whose works his own must be compared, and he was to be judged by a public whom he, more than almost any other man, had taught to be impatient of mediocrity.

I do not believe, however, that Irving's task would have been performed so ably if it had been undertaken when it was suggested by Constable ; the narrative could not have been so complete in its facts ; it might not have been written with the same becoming simplicity. It was fortunate that the work was delayed till it could be written from the largest store of materials, till its plan was fully matured in all its fair proportions, and till the author's mind had become filled with the profoundest veneration for his subject.

The simplicity already mentioned is the first quality of this work which impresses the reader. Here is a man of genius, a poet by temperament, writing the life of a man of transcendent wisdom and virtue—a life passed amidst great events, and marked by inestimable public services. There is a constant temptation to eulogy, but the temptation is resisted ; the actions of his hero are left to speak their own praise. He records events reverently, as one might have recorded them before the art of rhetoric was invented, with no exaggeration, with no parade of reflection ; the lessons of the narrative are made to impress themselves on the mind by the earnest and conscientious relation of facts. Meantime the narrator keeps himself in the background, solely occupied with the due presentation of his subject. Our eyes are upon the actors whom he sets before us—we never think of Mr. Irving.

A closer examination reveals another great merit of the work, the admirable proportion in which the author keeps the characters and events of his story. I suppose he could hardly have been conscious of this merit, and that it was attained without a direct effort. Long meditation had probably so shaped and matured the plan in his mind, and so arranged its parts in their just symmetry, that, executing it as he did, conscientiously, he could not have made it a different thing from what we have it. There is nothing distorted, nothing placed in too broad a light or thrown too far in the shade. The incidents of our Revolutionary war, the great event of Washington's life, pass before us as they passed before the eyes of the commander-in-chief himself, and from time to time varied his designs. Washington is kept always in sight, and the office of the biographer is never allowed to become merged in that of the historian.

The men who were the companions of Washington in the field or in civil life, are shown only in their association with him, yet are their characters drawn, not only with skill and spirit, but with a hand that delighted to do them justice. Nothing, I believe, could be more abhorrent to Irving's ideas of the province of a biographer, than the slightest detraction from the merits of others, that his hero might appear the more eminent. So remarkable is his work in this respect, that an accomplished member of the Historical Society,* who has analyzed the merits of the "Life of Washington" with a critical skill which makes me ashamed to speak of the work after him, has declared that no writer, within the circle of his reading, "has so successfully established his claim to the rare and difficult virtue of impartiality."

I confess, my admiration of this work becomes the greater the

* G. W. Greene. "Biographical Studies."

VIEW OF SUNNYSIDE—FROM DRAWING BY MILLER.

more I examine it. In the other writings of Irving are beauties which strike the reader at once. In this I recognize qualities which lie deeper, and which I was not sure of finding—a rare equity of judgment, a large grasp of the subject, a profound philosophy, independent of philosophical forms, and even instinctively rejecting them, the power of reducing an immense crowd of loose materials to clear and orderly arrangement, and forming them into one grand whole, as a skillful commander, from a rabble of raw recruits, forms a disciplined army, animated and moved by a single will.

The greater part of this last work of Irving was composed while he was in the enjoyment of what might be called a happy old age. This period of his life was not without its infirmities, but his frame was yet unwasted, his intellect bright and active, and the hour of decay seemed distant. He had become more than ever the object of public veneration, and in his beautiful retreat enjoyed all the advantages with few of the molestations of acknowledged greatness ; a little too much visited, perhaps, but submitting to the intrusion of his admirers with his characteristic patience and kindness. That retreat had now become more charming than ever, and the domestic life within was as beautiful as the nature without. A surviving brother, older than himself, shared it with him, and several affectionate nephews and nieces stood to him in the relation of sons and daughters. He was surrounded by neighbors who saw him daily, and honored and loved him the more for knowing him so well.

While he was engaged in writing the last pages of his " Life of Washington," his countrymen heard with pain that his health was failing and his strength ebbing away. He completed the work, however, though he was not able to revise the last sheets, and we then heard that his nights had become altogether sleep-

less. He was himself of opinion that his labors had been too severe for his time of life, and had sometimes feared that the power to continue them would desert him before his work could be finished. A catarrh to which he had been subject, had, by some injudicious prescription, been converted into an asthma, and the asthma, according to the testimony of his physician, Dr. Peters, one of the most attentive and assiduous of his profession, was at length accompanied by an enlargement of the heart. This disease ended in the usual way by a sudden dissolution. On the 28th of November last, in the evening, he had bidden the family good night in his usual kind manner, and had withdrawn to his room, attended by one of his nieces carrying his medicines, when he complained of a sudden feeling of intense sadness, sank immediately into her arms, and died without a struggle.

Although he had reached an age beyond which life is rarely prolonged, the news of his death was everywhere received with profound sorrow. The whole country mourned, but the grief was most deeply felt in his immediate neighborhood; the little children wept for the loss of their good friend. When the day of his funeral arrived, the people gathered from far and near to attend it; this capital poured fourth its citizens; the trains on the railway were crowded, and a multitude, like a mass meeting, but reverentially silent, moved through the streets of the neighboring village, which had been dressed in the emblems of mourning, and clustered about the church and the burial-ground. It was the first day of December; the pleasant Indian summer of our climate had been prolonged far beyond its usual date; the sun shone with his softest splendor and the elements were hushed into a perfect calm; it was like one of the blandest days of October. The hills and forests, the meadows and waters which

THE BURIAL PLACE OF WASHINGTON IRVING,
NEAR SLEEPY HOLLOW, TARRYTOWN.
From a Photograph by A. A Turner.

Irving had loved seemed listening, in that quiet atmosphere, as the solemn funeral service was read.

It was read over the remains of one whose life had well prepared his spirit for its new stage of being. Irving did not aspire to be a theologian, but his heart was deeply penetrated with the better part of religion, and he had sought humbly to imitate the example of the Great Teacher of our faith.

That amiable character which makes itself so manifest in the writings of Irving was seen in all his daily actions. He was ever ready to do kind offices, tender of the feelings of others, carefully just, but ever leaning to the merciful side of justice, averse from strife, and so modest that the world never ceased to wonder how it should have happened that one so much praised should have gained so little assurance. He envied no man's success, he sought to detract from no man's merits, but he was acutely sensitive both to praise and to blame—sensitive to such a degree that an unfavorable criticism of any of his works would almost persuade him that they were as worthless as the critic represented them. He thought so little of himself that he could never comprehend why it was that he should be the object of curiosity or reverence.

From the time that he began the composition of his "Sketch Book," his whole life was the life of an author. His habits of composition were, however, by no means regular. When he was in the vein, the periods would literally stream from his pen; at other times he would scarcely write anything. For two years after the failure of his brothers at Liverpool, he found it almost impossible to write a line. He was throughout life an early riser, and when in the mood, would write all the morning and till late in the day, wholly engrossed with his subject. In the evening he was ready for any cheerful pastime, in which he

took part with an animation almost amounting to high spirits. These intervals of excitement and intense labor, sometimes lasting for weeks, were succeeded by languor, and at times by depression of spirits, and for months the pen would lie untouched; even to answer a letter at these times was an irksome task.

In the evening he wrote but very rarely, knowing—so, at least, I infer—that no habit makes severer demands upon the nervous system than this. It was owing, I doubt not, to this prudent husbanding of his powers, along with his somewhat abstinent habits and the exercise which he took every day, that he was able to preserve unimpaired to so late a period the faculties employed in original composition. He has been a vigorous walker and a fearless rider, and in his declining years he drove out daily, not only for the sake of the open air and motion, but to refresh his mind with the aspect of nature. One of his favorite recreations was listening to music, of which he was an indulgent critic, and he contrived to be pleased and soothed by strains less artfully modulated than fastidious ears are apt to require.

His facility in writing and the charm of his style were owing to very early practice, the reading of good authors and the native elegance of his mind, and not, in my opinion, to any special study of the graces of manner or any anxious care in the use of terms and phrases. Words and combinations of words are sometimes found in his writings to which a fastidious taste might object; but these do not prevent his style from being one of the most agreeable in the whole range of our literature. It is transparent as the light, sweetly modulated, unaffected, the native expression of a fertile fancy, a benignant temper, and a mind which, delighting in the noble and the beautiful, turned involuntarily away from their opposities. His peculiar humor was, in a great measure, the offspring of this constitution of his

mind. This "fanciful playing with common things," as Mr. Dana calls it, is never coarse, never tainted with grossness, and always in harmony with our better sympathies. It not only tinged his writings, but overflowed in his delightful conversation.

I have thus set before you, my friends, with such measure of ability as I possess, a rapid and imperfect sketch of the life, character and genius of Washington Irving. Other hands will yet give the world a bolder, more vivid and more exact portraiture. In the meantime, when I consider for how many years he stood before the world as an author, with a still increasing fame—half a century in this most changeful of centuries—I cannot hesitate to predict for him a deathless renown. Since he began to write, empires have risen and passed away; mighty captains have appeared on the stage of the world, performed their part, and been called to their account; wars have been fought and ended, which have changed the destinies of the human race. New arts have been invented and adopted, and have pushed the old out of use; the household economy of half mankind has undergone a revolution. Science has learned a new dialect and forgotten the old; the chemist of 1807 would be a vain babbler among his brethren of the present day, and would in turn become bewildered in the attempt to understand them. Nation utters speech to nation in words that pass from realm to realm with the speed of light. Distant countries have been made neighbors; the Atlantic Ocean has become a narrow frith, and the Old World and the New shake hands across it; the East and the West look in at each other's windows. The new inventions bring new calamities, and men perish in crowds by the recoil of their own devices. War has learned more frightful modes of havoc, and armed himself with deadlier weapons; armies are borne to the battle-field on the wings of the wind, and dashed against

each other and destroyed with infinite bloodshed. We grow giddy with this perpetual whirl of strange events, these rapid and ceaseless mutations ; the earth seems to reel under our feet, and we turn to those who write like Irving, for some assurance that we are still in the same world into which we were born ; we read, and are quieted and consoled. In his pages we see that the language of the heart never becomes obsolete ; that Truth and Good and Beauty, the offspring of God, are not subject to the changes which beset the inventions of men. We become satisfied that he whose works were the delight of our fathers, and are still ours, will be read with the same pleasure by those who come after us.

If it were becoming, at this time and in this assembly, to address our departed friend as if in his immediate presence, I would say : " Farewell, thou who hast entered into the rest prepared, from the foundation of the world, for serene and gentle spirits like thine. Farewell, happy in thy life, happy in thy death, happier in the reward to which that death was the assured passage ; fortunate in attracting the admiration of the world to thy beautiful writings ; still more fortunate in having written nothing which did not tend to promote the reign of magnanimous forbearance and generous sympathies among thy fellow-men. The brightness of that enduring fame which thou hast won on earth is but a shadowy symbol of the glory to which thou art admitted in the world beyond the grave. Thy errand upon earth was an errand of peace and good-will to men, and thou art now in a region where hatred and strife never enter, and where the harmonious activity of those who inhabit it acknowledges no impulse less noble or less pure than that of love."

WM. CULLEN BRYANT—FROM DAGUERREOTYPE.
1854.

NEW YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

NEW YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

At the monthly meeting of the Society, held Dec. 6, 1859, after the usual transactions, the President, the Hon. Luther Bradish, made the following remarks:

"Since our last meeting, death has again invaded the circle of our Society, and removed from among us one of our earliest, most distinguished, and most cherished members. After a long, brilliant, and well-closed life, Washington Irving has gone to his final rest! Few among the current events of time have touched more profoundly the heart of the public, or moved more deeply its finer sensibilities. It was natural that this should be so. For Washington Irving was not only admired for the brilliancy of his genius and its productions, but he was beloved for his genial spirit, the amenity of his character, and the beauty of his life. In his departure from among us he has left behind him, to remind us of the magnitude of our loss, not only the rich heritage of his literary works, but the benign influence and encouraging example of his own well-spent and successful life. In the universal grief at such a loss, the members of this Society deeply sympathize; but in the intimate relations of the deceased with this Society as a loved and honored associate, we have an additional and peculiar motive for grief.

"It is therefore fitting and proper that the Society should, in a manner becoming the occasion and worthy of itself, signalize its high appreciation of the deceased, and its own peculiar and profound grief at his loss. To this end, I trust that suitable measures may be proposed and adopted on this occasion, and which I now invite."

President King, of Columbia College, rose and said, that the duty had been assigned to him of laying before the Society some resolutions expressive of the Society's appreciation of the loss it had sustained in the death of Washington Irving. They would require no preface, and he would therefore read them.

Resolved, That the New York Historical Society has received with deep and solemn interest the intelligence of the death of our distinguished associate, Washington Irving, whose glowing pen has illustrated the annals, as the beauty of his life has advanced the character of our country and our race.

Resolved, That, while mourning, as all must mourn, the loss of such a man, we acknowledge the Goodness that vouchsafed to him length of days to complete his last great work; and then, turning from further labors, to pass serenely, and without suffering, from mortal life to immortality.

Resolved, That this Society will celebrate the next anniversary of the birth of Washington Irving by a Public Address on his Life, Character, and Genius; that William Cullen Bryant be respectfully requested to prepare and deliver the address: and that the executive committee make the proper arrangements for the occasion.

Resolved, That a copy of the foregoing resolutions, duly authenticated, be transmitted by the President of the Society to the family of the deceased.

ADDRESS OF CHARLES KING.

The duty has been assigned to me, Mr. President, of offering for the consideration of the New York Historical Society certain resolutions expressive of our feelings at the death of Washington Irving, one of our earliest, oldest, and most distinguished members. There is no preface needed for the performance of such a duty, and I ask therefore at once to read the resolutions.

It is only a few short months ago that we met here to express our regrets at the decease of another illustrious member of our Society, too early snatched from us—our great historian Prescott. It was an added pang to our grief then, that in the meridian of his powers, with his work yet unaccomplished, and while we might reasonably look for continued years of honorable labors, Prescott was suddenly struck down. Now our sorrow—not less deep and sincere—is yet soothed by the reflection that Irving was graciously permitted to fulfil his work: that his beautiful life was prolonged into genial old age, with heart and affections still fresh, with judgment matured, and with faculties to complete the crowning glory of his literary labor—the biography of Washington. We cannot see so bright a life go out without mourning; yet we are consoled as by the dying sunset of a glorious day. That whole life, with the exception of the period passed in Europe, was spent in this city and vicinity. Mr. Irving was eminently a New Yorker, and fond of being so regarded; yet he was universal and catholic in his sympathies: and well was that largeness of sympathy repaid to him—for where are not his friends and admirers?

To those of us who knew him in early youth—we are few and far between now, who did thus know him—his personal character is so identified with his literary character, that we might well dis-

trust our judgment of his works from attachment to his person: but that the united voice of Europe and America confirms the most favorable judgment. He has written much, and on varied and widely differing subjects, but in all, well. In his great biographies, careful in investigation, truthful in statement, impartial in deciding, and always aiming to be right, he wins the confidence of his readers by his honesty, quite as much as their admiration by his pure, polished, transparent style. In his various essays and fancy sketches, we find the same genial temper, quaint imaginings, delicate humor, and stainless purity, which characterized the man. Never, indeed, was author so completely *daguerreotyped* in the sunlight of his own genius as Washington Irving. He stands revealed in all the lineaments of his moral nature by the brightness of his own flashing pen. And as those who knew him best cannot, in all their intercourse, recall a word or act of his that could offend the most sensitive delicacy, so no cheek ever felt a blush of distress at any line or sentiment he ever wrote.

Of such a life, Mr. President, and such literary labors, it seems meet and fitting altogether that his associates in this Society should make honorable record, as well in affectionate testimony of their own high regard, as for the edification of those who shall come after us to profit by such an example.

And it is most fortunate—shall I err in saying Providential?—that the close of such a life should be beautiful and serene as its course; that he should pass from life to death without a struggle, a murmur, or a sigh; and that his obsequies should constitute the most remarkable incident known in the record of any private man. Truly the heavens that smiled propitious on his life, smiled, too, propitious on his grave. On one of the loveliest days of our loveliest season, which our Longfellow tells us is called by the pious Acadian peasants, "*the Summer of all Saints*," our friend was

borne to his rest, followed by thousands from city and country, the long procession wending its way amid rustic displays of admiration and regret—all business suspended, all hearts intent upon the one common sorrow, and among scenes which his pen has immortalized. Slowly, slowly and sadly they went, as the great sun sank to its rest, "looking with eyes of love, through the golden" vapors around him, upon that grave which was just about to close upon all that was mortal of our friend.

It is a "Washington Irving day," was an exclamation from many lips—a day in its beauty, calmness, and loveliness, akin to his life and labors; and turning from that hill-side where he was laid to his rest, to gaze upon the enchanting panorama around, and to mark the demeanor of the thronging multitudes as they separated on their respective paths, it was impossible not to feel, with all the joy of grief, that our dead had been fittingly and worthily honored.

Mr. President, I add no more, and simply move the adoption of the resolutions.

The Rev. Dr. Bethune, upon being called upon by Mr. Bradish, said that he arose at the instance of an authority which he would never willingly disobey, to second the resolutions. He wished it to be understood that he did not deem himself a fit person to assume such a charge, as he had never been brought into close personal intimacy with Mr. Irving. He had indeed resided in his rural neighborhood; but he had not called upon him, out of respect for his retirement and pursuits. Dr. Bethune spoke of Mr. Irving's choice of a residence; in the valley, not amid the mountains; by the fields and meadows of the broad Tappaan sea, rather than the Highlands; in a congenial region, suited to his temperament. Aside from the intrinsic beauties of Irving's writings, he considered their great excellence to be their moral worth. After enlarging somewhat upon this topic, he concluded as follows: "Look upon

the *Life of Washington*, and you will see that Washington Irving was, if he chose to be, as strong as he was gentle. Let us honor his memory by following his example. If we cannot imitate the beauty of his power,—for it is not given to every one to be great, to instruct all, as master—let us, each in his sphere, show in his life that he has not read in vain the lessons of that beautiful teacher, who, though dead, yet speaketh."

ADDRESS OF GEORGE BANCROFT.

Memory cherishes the lovely qualities and beautiful career of our friend who has just ceased to be mortal: but words are wanting to portray his genius and his virtues. No American since Washington has taken with him to the grave the undivided affection of the American people like Irving. And it is right that it should be so. He came into the world just as a treaty with England gave our Republic a recognised existence among the nations; and he was lulled in his cradle by the pleasant songs of returning peace. The first great solemnity that he gazed upon in his childhood was the inauguration of our Constitution; so that the early life of him who was called to take the foremost part in creating an American literature, was bathed in the purest dews of our country's morning. As he grew up, his genial humor was nursed by the traditions and inspirations of his own native State; he opened his heart to all the pleasant influences that surrounded him; he made himself one with Nature as she reveals herself in her glory along the Hudson; and when he was scarce six-and-twenty years old he had written what the world will not suffer to be forgotten.

Thus far his literary activity had been the outgoing of the joyousness of youth; his mind was to be ripened, his character to be

matured, his rightful career to be made plain by the trials of affliction. He had loved and been beloved; and he watched, to use his own words, "beauty and innocence languish into the tomb." The being was departed whom he had loved as he never again was to love in this world, who had loved him as he was never again to be loved; and the gladsome humor that marked his entrance into life had become, not subdued, but tinged by a sweet-souled melancholy, and a large and more earnest sympathy with his kind. Now, when he stood midway in the path of human life, of a sudden his outward fortune was swept away and disappeared, and he was left in possession of nothing but his own mind. Blessed adversity! that opened to him the treasures which lay heaped up within his soul. Sorrow and misfortune only brought out in its brightness the purity of his nature, and were but as clouds that reflect the sunshine in a thousand hues.

In a foreign land, alone, impoverished, bereaved, he was so good and true, we might also say angels ministered to him. He looked with serene wisdom upon the angry waves that threatened him, and they passed under him without harm.

The career of letters now claimed him for its service. He had not been deeply read in books; but his mind was richly stored with images of beauty and primal truths, and he knew nature by heart. The English language, which better than any other can express the sincerity of affection, the delicacy of sentiment, the freshness of rural scenes, spread out its boundless wealth as his own; and at that period of what he himself calls "his troubled life," he conquered for himself fame and good will wherever that language is spoken.

It was at this period of his life that, during a summer at Paris, I formed with him that relation of friendly intimacy which grew in strength to the last. Time has in a measure effaced the rela-

tive difference of our years, but then he was almost twice as old as I. As we roamed together over the fields round Paris, many an earnest, and noble, and encouraging word fell from him for my behalf; and sometimes he would speak to me of his own occupations. How he proceeded with descriptions, I cannot say; but I found that where he gave expression to feeling, he would write continuously, pouring out as it were at one gush all he intended to give forth. One evening, after we had been many hours together, he took me to his room and read to me what he had written at one sitting, without pause, without one inspiration, and almost without interlineation or erasure.

I remember it to this day: it was his *St. Mark's Eve*, from the words "I am now alone in my chamber," to the end. He that studies such passages closely will find confessions of Irving's own inward experience and affections.

As an historian, Irving stands in the front rank. His life of Columbus has all kinds of merit—research, critical judgment, interest in the narrative, picturesque description, and golden style; exquisite in the melody of its cadences and its choice of words. His *Life of Washington*, which is still dear to the American people, is a marvel. No one has so painted the Father of his Country to the life; modestly disclaiming great extent of original research, he has yet added much that was not known before. But what distinguishes him is the grace and facility of his movement. He writes American history, as it were, by the aid of special endowments; he takes with him a candor that never fails; a clear, impartial judgment, and an unrivalled keenness of insight into character. He may err in minor details, but never in the general effect. No one has drawn so true, and touching, and vivid a picture of Washington in his retirement, as Irving, who published it while suffering from prostration of the nerves, a

depression of spirits, and that attack of asthma which harassed him to the last.

Nor let it be forgotten that Irving is a native of our own New York. Like Chaucer, and Milton, and Pope, and Gray, his birthplace was in the heart of a city. Among the Greeks, when a victor returned from the Olympian games, the citizens of his own home esteemed his prizes their own, went out to welcome his return, and would even break down the walls to receive him in greater triumph. Our Irving has wrestled in the game of life and came off the conqueror; he has gone to his long home; on the mildest of winter days we have surrounded him with flowers and laid him among his kindred, and his spirit in its flight has been borne upward on the affections of countless multitudes. Now, what shall we do here to mark for him our veneration and love? He gave to this city of merchants fame throughout the world of letters. Will not, then, the merchants of New York raise to his memory a statue of purest marble? It would be the payment of a debt to his fame, a just tribute to his virtues, a lesson to the rising generations. Fathers might then take their sons to gaze on his lineaments, and say, "There is the man who during more than fifty years employed his pen as none other could have done, and in all that time never wrote one word that was tainted by skepticism, nor one line that was not as chaste and pure as the violets in Spring."

ADDRESS OF DR. JOHN W. FRANCIS.

In my attendance on this meeting of the Historical Society, it was my purpose to remain a listener, rather than be a speaker. The deep interest which the notices of the life of the illustrious deceased have awakened everywhere, and the grateful tributes

now paid to the memory of the great author and his virtuous career, by the several gentlemen who have gratified this large assembly by their addresses this evening, have rendered the announcement of his death, if possible, still more impressive and instructive, and to this institution a memorable event indeed. I most cordially agree with every sentiment that has been expressed with regard to the spotless integrity of his life, the purity and excellence of his writings, and the mighty influence they have had, and are destined to maintain in after time, in the republic of letters. The gentlemen who have so amply given us their opinion on the richness of his intellect, the exquisite finish and chasteness of his style, the fertility of his imagination, his humor, his wit, his delicate satire, and e'en the very habits of the man, have rendered additional remarks of that import superfluous on this occasion; and yet I cannot but believe, in part, that many of their inferences, however faithfully deduced, have been drawn more from a study of his printed works than from a close personal knowledge of the man himself. I am aware that individually he was widely known, and that his character was well understood; and I am ready to acknowledge the obligations we are under for the benefit of that wisdom given us at this meeting, which their personal knowledge of him in later years has enabled them to impart.

But there is a period in the life of the great author in which I think I have some advantages, or information at least, over the orators of to-night; and that fact, and that alone, impels me to the statement of a few circumstances associated with Washington Irving during a portion of his school-boy days. In casting my eyes around this assembly I see few older than myself, and none, I believe, acquainted with him at the period to which I allude in the same relationship with myself. I was a boy at the same school with young Irving, now some sixty-two years ago, in 1797.

The institution was a male seminary, situated on John-street, next to the primary Methodist Meeting-house, and in the vicinity of the renowned John-street Theatre. There was some six years' difference in our ages, and Irving occupied a place in the school among the older youth at the head, where the prominent master had his desk and exercised his ferule. The younger the scholar, the nearer the entrance or door seemed to be the disposition of the seat for him. In that day of dreary teaching in our academies, young Irving was associated with boys of about the same age with himself, and their studies blended in classes in the ordinary way so common in school arrangements. About four years since, at an interview with Mr. Irving, the conversation turned to former times, and I asked him if he had a fair recollection of his school-associates of those days. He replied he believed they had all departed. I stated that I had in memory two survivors: one engaged in the lottery of political life, the other cultivating cabbages on his ample farm, with all the industry of an old Knickerbocker, though he was represented to be worth nigh half a million of dollars. Mr. Irving manifested a desire to make a visit to this legitimate descendant of the olden times, and we made an arrangement with that intent; but circumstances intervened, and the chances of life prevented it.

I remember well the elementary books scattered about the seminary, so characteristic of a common English school at that period: the *Columbian Orator* of Bingham, and Hamilton Moore's *Monitor;* the *Schoolmaster's Assistant* of Dilworth, and the *Arithmetic* of Pike, with here and there a copy of Dytch's English Dictionary. In those days, ballads, on printed slips, or folded in 8vo half sheets, were widely sold in the streets, and many found their way into the school-house. *Watty and Meg* was of the number, supposed generally to be an offspring of Burns, but after-

wards known as an early production of the celebrated Alexander Wilson, the great author of *American Ornithology;* many of Dibdin's famous songs, and Mrs. Rowson's *America, Commerce, and Freedom*, were also in the hands of many scholars. It may have been that the patriotism of the times in Adams' administration against the French, led to the distribution or toleration of this sort of literature among the boys, the better to diffuse the patriotic sentiment of the day. Young Irving, I think, was more of a general reader than an exact student, so far as prescribed duties enjoined. I take it that even at that juvenile period he had already adopted his own peculiar method of obtaining knowledge. He ruminated within himself, while his often seeming listlessness was seizing upon ludicrous perplexities which fell under his own notice. That quick foresightedness, that apt seizure of a novelty, a principle or a fact, that prompt comprehension when too much labor was not demanded, rendered it comparatively an easy matter for him to master his Rule of Three; and as to grammar, we may infer, from the ever-dominant beauty and gracefulness of his diction in all his writings, that he was etymological from the beginning. The leading teacher of the institution was ever insisting on the importance of rhetoric, and struggled hard to make every boy a Cicero. He assigned pieces for memory, to be rehearsed at the public exhibitions of his scholars, and such was his ethnological science and his acquaintance with the doctrine of temperaments, that he committed to Irving the heroic lines—

"My voice is still for *war*," etc.—

while I, nearly seven years younger, was given for rhetorical display—

"Pity the sorrows of a poor old man," etc.

There was a curious conflict existing in the school between the principal and his assistant-instructor: the former a legitimate burgher of the city, the latter a New England pedagogue. So far as I can remember, something depended on the choice of the boy's parents in the selection of his studies; but if not expressed otherwise, the principal stuck earnestly to Dilworth, while the assistant, for his section of instruction, held to Noah Webster. The same system or rule was adopted with the school in unfolding the intricacies of arithmetic: Dilworth was all in all with the principal, while Nicholas Pike, with his amended federal currency, was imparted by the assistant. To render this sketch of the institution where young Irving received the earlier principles of his school-education less imperfect, it may be stated that the slender duodecimo volume of Morse's geography was in use. This book was a novelty in school-apparatus, being the first of its kind which professed an account of the different States of the Union, and it enlisted the attention of the schoolmasters. The glowing description of New England by the reverend author, its fertile soil and products, often invoked a smile from the old Knickerbocker instructors. The picture which the patriotic author had drawn of Wethersfield, its fair damsels and its exuberant onions, invoked merriment among the juvenile learners, and secured for a while for the book the sobriquet, *the onion edition.* There was, besides, a special teacher of elocution, in partial association with the academy, by the name of Milne. He was the compiler of a book entitled the *Well-bred Scholar;* a man of taste, a dramatic writer, if not a performer. He possessed a magisterial air, a robust and athletic fulness; lived plethoric, and died, I believe, apoplectic. He was an Englishman by birth, and perhaps the first among us, in the progress of instruction, who attempted expounding the art of speaking. Where or how young Irving acquired a knowledge of the

classics I am unable to say. We had but three or four schools of any pretensions among us in that department of education at that time, and Irving, so far as I can learn, was not a scholar of Edward Riggs, a renowned teacher of the Latin, and the author of a popular grammar of that tongue—the first, indeed, of American manufacture in New York, as that of the famous old Cheever was of that of Boston. Irving, however, was preparing to enter Columbia College, but health prevented his further progress.

Some few years after we find Irving a student at law with that eminent advocate, the late Josiah Ogden Hoffman. What proficiency he made in that abstract study must be left to conjecture; but in due season he opened a law-office in Pearl-street, near Coenties Slip. His health was still precarious, and he was threatened with pulmonary mischiefs. He was slender and delicate in appearance, but never weary in measures to improve his condition. For wholesome exercise he carried into practical operation a suggestion to be engaged in some mechanical operation daily, and for a specified time to saw wood, in an apartment below his office; and it is more than probable that this service proved of greater benefit to his physical powers than might have been derived at that time from nostrums and a sea-voyage.

We need scarcely apprehend falling into error when we affirm that his law-office proved neither burdensome to his mental nor physical faculties. The legal profession, then, as now, abounded in numbers and in great talent. Moreover, the contemplative qualities of Irving were directed in other channels. He needed diversion; he demanded variety; and his views of life were comprehensive. It is a remark well founded, that realities are but dimly to be traced in the twilight of the imagination, and the first impulses of genius are often to be illustrated by the subsequent career of the individual. Young Irving at school was a quiet boy. I can

narrate no wild freaks or sports, originating from his conduct. It is true, that except from the general good order of his section of the room, and his devotion to reading, I had little chance to do more than occasionally look at him as at other scholars, witness his movements in the streets, and observe his rather taciturn and sequestered way. He seemed to have a habit of loneliness or abstraction; but he was early a reader, and I might say an observer from the beginning to the end of his life. These qualities, it is not to be supposed, were so prominent as to induce special notice among his school-associates at that period of his life; yet as his teacher seemed to bestow particular attention on his pupil, and often spoke of it in after time, his maturer wisdom may have found in his scholar a temperament of peculiar indications, and thus tolerated the impulse of a youth who gave promise of character. Among the incidents of young Irving's life, we know him to have been remarkable for his pedestrian excursions; at times alone, sometimes accompanied with his intimate friends, Paulding, Brevoort, Verplanck, and Blauvelt, an unfledged poet of New Jersey. His rambles at Weehawken and Powles' Hook; his tours to the Passaic; his grouse excursions at Hempstead; his walks through the Stuyvesant lane of cherry-trees (which, it may be remarked, passed directly through the very grounds on which this edifice where we are now convened stands), all betrayed that love of nature which he has so luxuriantly unfolded in his captivating writings.

These rambles were profitable to health and wholesome to intellect; they furnished materials for contemplation and enlarged intellectual capacity; but Irving at this juncture in early manhood sought out other resources of mental gratification. He was bookish, and he read; he individualized the author whom he studied, and he extended the circle of his personal associations. He must have

formed an acquaintance with a portion of that mass of men who flourished at that dawn of literary effort in this city. His profession, that of law, had secured to him some knowledge of Hamilton and Burr, of Harrison and Colden, of Williams and Jay, of Jones and Livingston; but with a generous freedom he could seek out Brown, the novelist, Linn, the poet, Allsop, Clifton, and Low. This you will say is a brief list; but genuine writers at that day were not a common article. In my searches after novelties I have walked a day to cast a glance at an author; and a reward of a thousand dollars could not bring forth for inspection a penny-a-liner. For my own part I distinctly recollect the first time I caught a glimpse of Noah Webster, when I felt a triumph as if I had made a discovery in philosophy. But there were other sources of instruction abundantly accessible to all, and Irving would draw wisdom from them; the acting drama of those times yielded gratification to the most refined in taste: the remnant of the old American company of performers was stirring in their vocation, and the great renown which waited upon their achievements was recognised as substantially earned. That Irving's imagination was at an early period enamored of scenic exhibitions, and that he took great delight in theatrical displays, as holding the "mirror up to nature," is the concurrent testimony of all acquainted with him during his minority. That his mind was fructified by a close study of the older dramatists I think a safe inference. He studied the Spanish language the better to comprehend the Spanish drama. That fountain of knowledge yields a living spring to all who desire to delineate human character; and who has excelled Irving in that branch of intricate illustration? The animating movements, the picturesque displays made fiction almost a reality, and illumined a mind so susceptible of impression. The drama, with sensibilities like his, roused to newness of reflection, dissipated *ennui*, and

invoked the inner powers of a lonely student to increased literary effort. He must have availed himself of these advantages, now still further multiplying by the efforts of Dunlap and Smith, to add novelty to the stage, if not by gorgeous scenery, yet by the bringing forward the popular productions of Kotzebue and Schiller, the acknowledged masters of the drama at that time in Germany. A personal knowledge of some facts, and the humorous and critical disquisitions on the stage, which Irving published shortly after, under the name of Jonathan Oldstyle, demonstrate his intimacy with this species of literature. His *Salmagundi* adds to our proofs of this fact.

I forbear to enter into a consideration of the literary labors of Mr. Irving, voluminous as they are, and precious as the world acknowledges them. His *Knickerbocker's History* excited an interest in the metropolis never before roused up by any literary occurrence; scarcely, perhaps, by any public event. The reading community, upon its first appearance, were seized with amazement at the wondrous antiquarian research of the author, his lifelike pictures of the olden times, and his boundless humor and refined wit; and many melted in sympathy at the fate of old Diedrick himself, the deserted inhabitant of the Mulberry-street tenement. I confess myself to have been one of the thousands who sought out his obscure lodgings in vain. The brilliant career of Mr. Irving may be dated from the publication of this assumed history, and the wheel of fortune now turned in his behalf. The book was received by Campbell, the poet: through the hands of Henry Brevoort, Walter Scott possessed a copy, and almost raved with delight in its perusal. The omnipotent wit and satirist, George Canning, had nigh fractured his ribs by laughter over its pages. The reading public sought after it, and what the select averred, the masses confirmed. Mr. Irving now became the lion of London,

and of the literary world. It is, however, not of his writings that I would wish to speak, at present, but rather confine myself to a few reminiscences of his individuality. The ample page of criticism has already recorded his vast literary merits, and inscribed his name on the tablet of immortality. He is national, he is universal.

Did not the lateness of the evening forbid, I would dwell upon that remarkable faculty which Irving possessed of rejoicing in the luxuries and beauties of nature; his love of animals, and his kindly feelings for their comfort; his delight in surveying the garden and the farm-yard; his zeal to behold the anomalies of the vegetable world; his gratification in comprehending the labors of the naturalist; and I would attempt to point out how the defects of the schools of his boyhood were overcome by reading, and a close observation of men and things. He had the power of drawing knowledge from minute as well as great occurrences, from the ludicrous as well as the severe. He has more than once dwelt with me upon the odd characters he had encountered in the streets of our city, in those early days, and none seems to have made a stronger impression on him than the once famous Wilhelm Hoffmeister, popularly known as Billy the Fiddler. I do not know whether this musical genius and singularly-constructed man finds a place in any of Irving's writings.

You all, gentlemen, have dwelt upon the genial humor of Irving; his kindly nature was ever apparent. An instance in illustration I will give. Upon his return from his first European tour, after an absence of two years, he had scarcely entered into his parent's domicile in William-street, when his first inquiry was concerning the condition and prospects of an unfortunate maimed boy, of the neighborhood, who possessed singular qualities of mental organization. Mr. Irving had a marvellous tendency to the curious. Had he walked through a lunatic

asylum he would seem to have been qualified to write a treatise on insanity; had he been bred to physic,—could his sensibilities have endured such servitude,—he might have become famous for his descriptive powers in diagnostic pathology. Language like this may sound extravagant; but the devoted reader of his pages will be strengthened in such an opinion, by comparing the propriety and clearness of his diction in all he utters touching the subject in hand, whether belonging to the schools of arts or of letters, whether in technical science or in the philosophy of nature. Mr. Irving was the best judge of his own faculties and attainments, and what he assumed he accomplished. His competitor is yet to be discovered.

His courteous and benignant intercourse with others, whether in the humbler or the higher walks of life, was of so captivating a character as never to create a rebellious feeling, but ever awaken emotions of friendship. Unobtrusive, with his vast merits, nay almost timid, he won esteem from all beholders. He possessed a quick discernment in the analysis of character. I will give an example. Jarvis, the painter, had just finished the head of a venerable member of the bar, and courteously requested, Lavater-like, Mr. Irving's opinion of the character. "You have faithfully delineated the Genius of Dulness," replied Irving. The answer was a biography of the individual. There was a trait of singular and peculiar excellence in Mr. Irving,—of all mortals he was the freest of envy; and merit of every order he was ready to recognise. A literary man, *par excellence*, he could admire the arts, and look upon mechanical skill and the artisan with the feelings, if not the acquisition, of the most accomplished in scientific pursuits; he knew that intellect presided in mechanics as well as in the Homeric song. He endured without annoyance the renown which waited upon the career of Fenimore Cooper; nay, he has written

of the genius of his great rival in terms of strongest laudation, in admiration of his noble conceptions and his graphic powers. In like manner has he treated our Bryant. He rarely volunteered his opinion, but he never turned his back on what he had once expressed. Were I to concentrate my views on the more immediate sources of that knowledge, in his several writings, which he displayed with such copious profusion both in active life and in letters, I would affirm that a cautious reading of good authors, an almost unquenchable thirst for dramatic literature in early manhood, and a wide observation, secured by much travel, of the scenery of the bustling world, and of nature herself, had fertilized that peculiar and susceptible mind, and given to his happy mental organization its most potent charms.

The deduction is safe, if formed even from the study of his writings alone, that he was fond of incidents and adventures; they enriched his gallery for illustration. Like Hawthorne, he admired a snow-storm; he loved music; he loved little children, that faithful index of the human soul, and often participated in their innocent sports. He abjured excess, and was, at all times, moderate in indulgence at the table. He detested tobacco in every form, with all the abhorrence of Doctor Franklin or Daniel Webster.

His toilet was neat; his dress free from peculiarities: the extremes of fashion never reached him. His portrait, with the ample furred coat, executed by Jarvis, and painted after the appearance of the Knickerbocker history, is the most characteristic of him at that period of his life, and gives the most striking idea of his mental aspect, as he was daily seen in public, accompanied with his friend Renwick, or with the superb Decatur, or old Ironsides.

About two weeks before his death, Mr. Irving made his final visit to this city from his residence at Sunnyside. He had an offi-

cial trust to fulfil as President of the Board of Trustees of the Astor Library: he manifested no special indications of alarming physical suffering. Yet it was observed he had less of muscular strength, and that his frame was much attenuated. With his intimate friend, the learned librarian, Dr. Cogswell, having surveyed with gratification the improvements of the enlarged edifice and the accessions of books recently made to that great institution, he remarked with some earnestness, "What, Doctor, might have been my destiny could I have commanded these treasures in my youth!"

Foreign criticism has exerted her refined powers in unfolding the merits and the beauties inherent in the writings of our illustrious friend and associate; the schools of Addison and of Johnson have each awarded to him the laurel. At home a dissentient voice has not been expressed, and the republic at large has testified to the purity of his principles and the worth of his labors by a sale almost unparalleled in the annals of bibliopoly. Allibone, with the impartiality of a literary historian, has given us a charming view of this gratifying truth. But I shall make but one brief citation on the subject of our national author's qualities; it is from a classical pen, that has repeatedly dwelt upon the delectable harmony of the life and literature of Irving. I have taken it from Tuckerman; could I have written half so well I would have preferred my own language:

"The outline of his works," says Mr. T., "should be filled by the reader's imagination with the accessories and coloring incident to so varied, honorable, and congenial a life. In all his wanderings, his eye was busied with the scenes of nature, and cognizant of their every feature; his memory brooded over the tradition of the past, and his heart caught and reflected every phase of humanity. With the feelings of a poet and the habitudes of an artist,

he then wandered over the rural districts of merry England, the melancholy hills of romantic Spain, and the exuberant wilderness of his native land, gathering up their most picturesque aspects and their most affecting legends, and transferring them, with the pure and varied colors of his genial expression, into permanent memorials."

Posterity, to whom he may most safely be confided, will neither forget the man nor his writings: these unfold the treasures of a commanding genius, with the excellences of an unparalleled diction, while of the author himself we may emphatically affirm that his literary products are a faithful transcript of his peculiar mind. He enjoys a glorious triumph: we need not plead in extenuation of a line that he has penned. Let us console ourselves at his loss that he was a native and "to the manner born," that his life was immaculate and without reproach, and that in death he triumphed over its terrors. Let it be our pride that the patriarch of American literature is indissolubly connected, in his mighty fame, with the Father of his Country.

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

A special meeting of the Society was held this evening (Thursday), the 15th of December, 1859, at the residence of the Hon. David Sears, in Beacon Street.

Mr. SEARS, one of the Vice-Presidents of the Society, on taking the chair at eight o'clock, announced in appropriate terms, that the purpose of the meeting was to take some action relative to the death of Washington Irving, an Honorary Member of the Society.

Mr. Longfellow offered the following resolutions:—

Resolved, That while we deeply deplore the death of our friend and associate, Washington Irving, we rejoice in the completeness of his life and labors, which, closing together, have left behind them so sweet a fame, and a memory so precious.

Resolved, That we feel a just pride in his renown as an author; not forgetting, that, to his other claims upon our gratitude, he adds also that of having been the first to win for our country an honorable name and position in the history of letters.

Resolved, That we hold in affectionate remembrance the noble example of his long literary career, extending through half a century of unremitted labors, graced with all the amenities of authorship, and marred by none of its discords and contentions.

Resolved, That, as members of this Historical Society, we regard with especial honor and admiration his Lives of Columbus, the Discoverer, and of Washington, the Father, of our country.

Resolved, That a copy of these resolutions be transmitted to his family, with the expression of our deepest and sincerest sympathy.

Mr. SEARS read a note from Mr. Ticknor, stating that a slight accident prevented him from being present, and uniting, as he would gladly have done, with the Society, in paying the tribute of respect to the memory of their late eminent associate.

REMARKS OF MR. LONGFELLOW.

Every reader has his first book: I mean to say, one book, among all others, which, in early youth, first fascinates his imagination, and at once excites and satisfies the desires of his mind. To me, this first book was the "Sketch-Book" of Washington Irving. I was a school-boy when it was published, and read each succeeding number with ever-increasing wonder and delight,—spell-bound by its pleasant humor, its melancholy tenderness, its atmosphere of revery; nay, even by its grey-brown covers, the shaded letters of the titles, and the fair, clear type,—which seemed an outward symbol of the style.

How many delightful books the same author has given us, written before and since,—volumes of history and of fiction, most of which illustrate his native land, and some of which illuminate it, and make the Hudson, I will not say as classic, but as romantic, as the Rhine! Yet still the charm of the "Sketch-Book" remains unbroken; the old fascination still lingers about it; and, whenever I open its pages, I open also that mysterious door which leads back into the haunted chambers of youth.

Many years afterward, I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Irving in Spain; and found the author, whom I had loved, repeated in the man,—the same playful humor, the same touches of sentiment, the same poetic atmosphere, and, what I admired still more, the entire absence of all literary jealousy, of all that mean avarice of fame, which counts what is given to another as so much taken from one's self,—

> "And rustling, hears in every breeze
> The laurels of Miltiades."

At this time, Mr. Irving was at Madrid, engaged upon his "Life of Columbus;" and if the work itself did not bear ample testimony to his zealous and conscientious labor, I could do so from personal observation. He seemed to be always at work. "Sit down," he would say: "I will talk with you in a moment; but I must first finish this sentence."

One summer morning, passing his house at the early hour of six, I saw his study-window already wide open. On my mentioning it to him afterwards, he said, "Yes: I am always at my work as early as six." Since then, I have often remembered that sunny morning and that open window, so suggestive of his sunny temperament and his open heart, and equally so of his patient and persistent toil; and have recalled those striking words of Dante:—

"Seggendo in piuma,
In fama non si vien, nè sotto coltre;
Senza la qual, chi sua vita consuma,
Cotal vestigio in terra, di sè lascia
Qual fummo in aere ed in acqua la schiuma."

"Seated upon down,
Or in his bed, man cometh not to fame;
Withouten which, whoso his life consumes,
Such vestige of himself on earth shall leave
As smoke in air and in the water foam."

Remembering these things, I esteem it a great though a melancholy privilege to lay upon his hearse the passing tribute of these resolutions.

REMARKS OF MR. EVERETT.

I cordially concur in the resolutions which Mr. Longfellow has submitted to the Society. They do no more than justice to the merits and character of Mr. Irving as a man and as a writer; and it is to me, sir, a very pleasing circumstance, that a tribute like this to the Nestor of the prose writers of America—so just and so happily expressed—should be paid by the most distinguished of our American poets.

If the year 1769 is memorable above every other of the last century for the number of eminent men to which it gave birth, the year 1859 is thus far signalized in this century for the number of bright names which it has taken from us; and surely that of Washington Irving may be accounted with the brightest on the list.

It is eminently proper that we should take a respectful notice of his decease. He has stood for many years on the roll of our Honorary Members; and he has enriched the literature of the country with two first-class historical works, which, although from their subjects they possess a peculiar attraction for the people of the United States, are yet, in general interest, second to no contemporary works in that department of literature. I allude, of course, to the "History of the Life and Voyages of Columbus," and the "Life of Washington."

Although Mr. Irving's devotion to literature as a profession—and a profession pursued with almost unequalled success—was caused by untoward events, which, in ordinary cases, would have proved the ruin of a life, a rare good fortune attended his literary career. Without having received a collegiate education, and destined first to the legal profession, which he abandoned as uncongenial, he had, in very early life, given promise of attaining a bril-

liant reputation as a writer. Some essays from his pen attracted notice before he had reached his majority. A few years later, the numbers of the "Salmagundi," to which he was a principal contributor, enjoyed a success, throughout the United States, far beyond any former similar work, and not surpassed, if equalled, by anything which has since appeared.

This was followed by "Knickerbocker's History of New York," which at once placed Mr. Irving at the head of American humorists. In the class of compositions to which it belongs, I know of nothing happier than this work in our language. It has probably been read as widely, and with as keen a relish, as anything from Mr. Irving's pen. It would seem cynical to subject a work of this kind to an austere commentary,—at least, while we are paying a tribute to the memory of its lamented author; but I may be permitted to observe, that, while this kind of humorous writing fits well with the joyous temperament of youth, in the first flush of successful authorship, and is managed by Mr. Irving with great delicacy and skill, it is still, in my opinion, better adapted for a *jeu d'esprit* in a magazine than for a work of considerable compass. To travesty an entire history seems to me a mistaken effort of ingenuity, and not well applied to the countrymen of William of Orange, Grotius, the De Witts, and Van Tromp.

This work first made Mr. Irving known in Europe. His friend, Mr. Henry Brevoort, one of the associate wits of the "Salmagundi," had sent a copy of it to Sir Walter Scott,—himself chiefly known, at that time, as the most popular of the English poets of the day; though, as such, beginning to be outshone by the fresher brightness of Byron's inspiration. Scott, though necessarily ignorant of the piquant allusions to topics of contemporary interest, and wholly destitute of sympathy with the spirit of the work, entered fully into its humor as a literary effort, and spoke of it with discrimination

and warmth. His letter to Mr. Henry Brevoort is now in the possession of his son, our esteemed corresponding associate, Mr. J. Carson Brevoort; to whose liberality we are indebted for the curious panoramic drawing of the military works in the environs of Boston, executed by a British officer in 1775, which I have had the pleasure, on behalf of Mr. Brevoort, of tendering to the Society this evening. Mr. Carson Brevoort has caused a lithographic *fac-simile* of Sir Walter Scott's letter to be executed; and of this interesting relic he also offers a copy to the acceptance of the Society. The letter has been inserted in the very instructive article on Mr. Irving in Allibone's invaluable "Dictionary of English and American Authors;" but as it is short, and may not be generally known to the Society, I will read it from the *fac-simile*.*

After Mr. Irving had been led to take up his residence abroad, and to adopt literature as a profession and a livelihood,—a resource to which he was driven by the failure of the commercial house of his relatives, of which he was nominally a partner,—he produced in rapid succession, a series of works which stood the test of English criticism, and attained a popularity not surpassed—hardly equalled—by that of any of his European contemporaries. This fact, besides being attested by the critical journals of the day, may be safely inferred from the munificent prices paid by the great London bookseller, the elder Murray, for the copyright of several of his productions. He wrote, among other subjects, of English manners, sports, and traditions,—national traits of character,—certainly the most difficult topics for a foreigner to treat: and he wrote at a time when Scott was almost annually sending forth one of his marvellous novels; when the poetical reputation of Moore, Byron, Campbell, and Rogers, was at the zenith; and the public appetite was consequently fed almost to satiety by these familiar domestic

* For this letter see *Allibone's Sketch*, page 25.

favorites. But, notwithstanding these disadvantages and obstacles to success, he rose at once to a popularity of the most brilliant and enviable kind; and this, too, in a branch of literature which had not been cultivated with distinguished success in England since the time of Goldsmith; and, with the exception of Goldsmith, not since the days of Addison and Steele.

Mr. Irving's manner is often compared with Addison's; though, closely examined, there is no great resemblance between them, except that they both write in a simple, unaffected style, remote from the tiresome stateliness of Johnson and Gibbon. It was one of the witty but rather ill-natured sayings of Mr. Samuel Rogers, whose epigrams sometimes did as much injustice to his own kind and generous nature as they did to the victims of his pleasantry, that Washington Irving was Addison and water,—a judgment which, if seriously dealt with, is altogether aside from the merits of the two writers, who have very little in common. Addison had received a finished classical education at the Charter-House and at Oxford; was eminently a man of books, and had a decided taste for literary criticism. Mr. Irving, for a man of letters, was not a great reader; and, if he possessed the critical faculty, never exercised it. Addison quoted the Latin poets freely, and wrote correct Latin verses himself. Mr. Irving made no pretensions to a familiar acquaintance with the classics, and probably never made a hexameter in his life. Addison wrote some smooth English poetry, which Mr. Irving, I believe, never attempted; but, with the exception of two or three exquisite hymns (which will last as long as the English language does), one brilliant simile of six lines in the "Campaign," and one or two sententious but not very brilliant passages from Cato, not a line of Addison's poetry has been quoted for a hundred years. But Mr. Irving's peculiar vein of humor is not inferior in playful raciness to Addison's; his nicety of charac-

terization is quite equal; his judgment upon all moral relations as sound and true; his human sympathies more comprehensive, tenderer, and chaster; and his poetical faculty, though never developed in verse, vastly above Addison's. One chord in the human heart, —the pathetic,—for whose sweet music Addison had no ear, Irving touched with the hand of a master. He learned that skill in the school of early disappointment.

In this respect, the writer was, in both cases, reflected in the man. Addison, after a protracted suit, made an "ambitious match" with a termagant peeress. Irving, who would as soon have married Hecate as a woman like the Countess of Warwick, buried a blighted hope never to be rekindled, in the grave of a youthful sorrow.

As miscellaneous essayists, in which capacity only they can be compared, Irving exceeds Addison in versatility and range, quite as much as Addison exceeds Irving in the far less important quality of classical tincture; while, as a great national historian, our countryman reaped laurels in a field which Addison never entered.

Mr. Irving's first great historical work, the "Life and Voyages of Columbus," appeared at London and New York in 1828. Being at Bordeaux in the winter of 1825–6, he received a letter from Mr. Alexander H. Everett, then Minister of the United States in Spain, informing him that a work was passing through the press, containing a collection of documents relative to the voyages of Columbus; among which were many, of a highly important nature, recently discovered in the public archives. This was the now well-known work of Navarrete, the Secretary of the Royal Spanish Academy of History. Mr. Everett, in making this communication to Mr. Irving, suggested that the translation of Navarrete's volumes into English, by some American scholar, would be very desirable. Mr. Irving concurred in this opinion, and, having previously in-

tended to visit Madrid, shortly afterwards repaired to that capital, with a view to undertake the proposed translation.

Navarrete's collection was published soon after Mr. Irving's arrival at Madrid; and finding it rich in original documents hitherto unknown, which threw additional light on the discovery of America, he conceived the happy idea (instead of a simple translation) of preparing from them, and other materials, liberally placed at his disposal, in the public and private libraries of Spain, and especially that of Mr. Obadiah Rich, our Consul at Valencia, with whom Mr. Irving was domesticated at Madrid, and who possessed a collection of manuscripts and books of extreme value,—a new history of the greatest event of modern times, drawn up in the form of a Life of Columbus. He addressed himself with zeal and assiduity to the execution of this happy conception; and, in about two years, the work, in four octavo volumes, was ready for the press. When it is considered that much of the material was to be drawn from ancient manuscripts and black-letter chronicles in a foreign tongue, it is a noble monument of the industry as well as the literary talent of its author.

That these newly discovered materials for a life of Columbus, and a history of the great discovery, should have fallen directly into the hands of an American writer so well qualified to make a good use of them as Mr. Irving, and that the credit of producing the first adequate memorial of this all-important event should have been thus secured to the United States by their most popular author, is certainly a very pleasing coincidence.

The limits of this occasion require me to pass over two or three popular works of a light cast, for which Mr. Irving collected the materials while carrying on his historical researches in Spain, as also those which issued from his industrious and fertile pen after his return to the United States in 1832. At this period of his life,

he began seriously to contemplate the preparation of his last great production,—the "Life of Washington." This subject had been pressed upon him, while he was yet in Europe, by Mr. Archibald Constable, the celebrated publisher at Edinburgh; and Mr. Irving determined to undertake it as soon as his return to America should bring him within reach of the necessary documents. Various circumstances concurred to prevent the execution of the project at this time; especially his appointment as Minister to Spain, and his residence in that country from 1842 to 1846. On his return to America, at the close of his mission, he appears to have applied himself diligently to the long-meditated undertaking; though he proceeded but slowly, at first, in its execution. The first volume appeared in 1855, and the four following in rapid succession. The work was finally completed the present year,—fit close of the life of its illustrious author, and of a literary career of such rare brilliancy and success.

It would be altogether a work of supererogation to engage in any general commentary on the merits of Mr. Irving's two great historical works; and the occasion is not appropriate for a critical analysis of them. They have taken a recognised place in the historical literature of the age, and stand, by all confession, in the front rank of those works of history, of which this century, and especially this country, has been so honorably prolific. Reserving a distinguished place apart for the venerable name of Marshall, Mr. Irving leads the long line of American historians,—first in time, and not second in beauty of style, conscientious accuracy, and skilful arrangement of materials. As his two works treat respectively of themes, which, for purely American interest, stand at the head of all single subjects of historical research; so there is no one of our writers to whom the united voice of the country would, with such cheerful unanimity, have intrusted their composition.

From the time that he entered for life upon a literary career, Mr. Irving gave himself almost exclusively to its pursuit. He filled the office of Chargé d'Affaires for a short time in London, prior to his return to the United States; and that of Minister to Spain from 1842 to 1846. His diplomatic despatches in that capacity are among the richest of the treasures which lie buried in the public archives at Washington.

A more beautiful life than Mr. Irving's can hardly be imagined. Not uncheckered with adversity, his early trials, under the soothing influence of time, without subduing the natural cheerfulness of his disposition, threw over it a mellow tenderness, which breathes in his habitual trains of thought, and is reflected in the amenity of his style. His misfortunes in business, kindly overruled by a gracious Providence, laid the foundation of literary success, reputation, and prosperity. At two different periods of his career, he engaged in public life; entering it without ambition, performing its duties with diligence and punctuality, and leaving it without regret. He was appointed Chargé d'Affaires to London under General Jackson's administration, and Minister to Spain under Mr. Tyler's,—the only instances, perhaps, in this century, in which a distinguished executive appointment has been made without a thought as to the political opinions of the person appointed. Mr. Irving's appointment to Spain was made on the recommendation of Mr. Webster, who told me that he regarded it as one of the most honorable memorials of his administration of the Department of State. It was no doubt a pleasing circumstance to Mr. Irving, to return, in his advancing years, crowned with public honors, to the country where, in earlier life, he had pursued his historical studies with so much success. But public life had no attractions for him. The respect and affection of the community followed him to his retirement. He lived in prosperity, without an ill-wisher

finished the work which was given him to do, amidst the blessings of his countrymen; and died, amidst loving kindred, in honor and peace.

REMARKS OF COL. ASPINWALL.

Mr. President,—I speak by request, and should not otherwise have ventured to address you on the present occasion. It was my good fortune, sir, to make the acquaintance of Washington Irving in London, shortly after the termination of our last war with Great Britain. This led to an intimacy, quite domestic at times; and to years of cordial, unbroken friendship. In 1817, the mercantile establishment—which he had been kindly persuaded by his brother to join, that he might share its prosperity rather than the labor of the counting-house—had sunk under the pressure of unavoidable calamities; and he, with his brother (Dr. Peter Irving), came to reside in London, where he resumed his pen, and manfully braced himself up to the task of gaining an honest independence. The period was not propitious. The irritation excited by the war had not ceased. English critics and periodical writers, in obedience to the popular impulse, derided the scantiness of our literature, and seized upon an American book as if it were their prey, and not at all a theme or subject of fair, legitimate criticism. On the other hand, it was a marked peculiarity of Washington Irving to need sympathy, support, and cheering encouragement. When these were withheld, he was shorn of half his strength.

It was under such disheartening circumstances that he began the "Sketch-Book." Writing, as it were, under the spur of necessity, he did not, as afterwards, when engaged upon other works of taste and imagination, wait for the moment of inspiration, but, oftentimes to the detriment of his health, toiled on incessantly,

whether in the vein or not. Sensible that he was no longer in the midst of his old friends and countrymen, who had welcomed his previous works with rapturous applause, but in a community whose tolerance could hardly be hoped for, he earnestly strove, in the course of his "Sketch-Book," to forestall, to soften and propitiate, the prevailing adverse spirit, by gentle rebuke, and appeals to generous feelings of brotherhood. For still greater protection, he took excessive pains to refine and perfect every sentence and every expression, until he considered it proof against cavil and derision.

When the "Sketch-Book" was ready for publication, no London publisher of eminence would consent to bring it out After part of it had appeared in numbers in the United States, Mr. Miller, the present despatch-agent of the American Legation in London, but at that period a publisher and bookseller, undertook the publication at the author's expense. But scarcely had the first volume made its appearance, when Mr. Miller failed. Shortly after, at the friendly instance of Sir Walter Scott, Mr. Murray, who stood at the head of English publishers, bought the impression and British copyright. Under his auspices, the "Sketch-Book" soon found its way to the libraries and drawing-rooms of the three kingdoms. All classes of readers were fascinated by the beauty, and the malignity of criticism was disarmed by the humor, of the book. The author was overwhelmed by civilities from all quarters,—from the wise, the good, and the great, who sought to know and to honor him; and from the manœuvring aspirants of the fashionable circles, who merely sought to make their houses more attractive by showing him up as a lion. To be thus singled out, and exposed to the public gaze, or, indeed, to be placed at any time in a conspicuous station before an assemblage, was his utter aversion. To escape such annoyances, he would often take refuge with his friends or

family connections in the country. It was in an excursion of this sort,—I believe from Birmingham to Oxford,—in company with his distinguished friend Leslie, the artist, that he wrought out, on the top of a stage-coach, his inimitable burlesque, "The Stout Gentleman."

It is not my purpose, Mr. President, to enter into any criticism of Mr. Irving's works; that subject has been exhausted by the able and comprehensive comments of our eminent colleagues (Mr. Longfellow and Mr. Everett) who have preceded me: but I would advert merely to the charge of anachronism which was brought against the "Sketch-Book." It was boldly said, that Mr. Irving had portrayed, as existing, English manners and customs that had been borrowed from the bygone days and writings of Addison and Steele, but were now utterly unknown and obsolete. Nothing is more untrue. He described what still exists, and what he had, and his Scotch critic had not, seen. Mr. Irving was no plagiarist. In regard to all proper subjects of description, and all that may be derived from observation, few writers have been so completely independent of extraneous aid as Washington Irving. Nothing seems to escape his notice. The narratives of his own adventures on the prairies and elsewhere, furnish, in every page, proofs of the vigilance and acuteness of his observation. His other more imaginative writings abound in instances, as all his friends know, of character, manners, and incidents drawn from life. His quick sense of the ludicrous was always in unison with the genuine kindness of his heart. He makes his portraits of character laughable, but generally contrives to secure our good-will for the individual portrayed.

Such of the works of Washington Irving as were written out of England after 1824 were confided to my disposal, and published under contracts made by me as his agent. Hence I am able to

state, that, in his transactions, he had all the tact, promptitude, and exactness of a trained man of business; and also, that, owing to his amiable, upright, and liberal demeanor under all exigencies, a long intercourse between him, his publishers, and myself, continued to the end, unclouded even by a shade of dissatisfaction.

It would not become me, sir, to advert to Mr. Irving's diplomatic career, after the ample and honorable tribute paid to his merits by so accomplished a diplomatist and statesman as our distinguished colleague (Mr. Everett); but I would merely say, that, when he was Chargé d'Affaires in London, such was the mutual confidence and cordial good-will subsisting between him and the corps of the Foreign Office, that he often drew up his reply to the minister's despatch in the office itself, and in concert with those who would commonly be regarded as his standing antagonists, but who were in truth, to the end of life, his fast friends.

His frank, affable, unassuming deportment, the purity of his life, his refined intelligence, and his quiet and cheerful pleasantry, made him welcome everywhere; and he, in turn, appreciated very highly the hospitalities and social intercourse which he enjoyed in England. But the favorite scene of his hours of relaxation was among children who had once known him and his amusing frolics and stories. He was always sure to be welcomed, at the first glimpse, with shouts of delight from the little merry group that rushed to him, hung upon his skirts, and clamored for another repetition of some thrice-told nursery-tale of his own invention.

A more touching example of fraternal affection than that which bound Washington Irving and his brothers together, the world has seldom witnessed. When Peter and Washington lived together in London, in modest apartments in Edward Street, Foley Place, the little daily stratagems, and efforts of self-sacrifice, of each, for the comfort of the other, were frequently the admiration of their friends

and countrymen. Both were industriously engaged in literary labors; but the earnings all went into one purse.

In after-years, when in Spain, Peter, in the hope of aiding his brother, and to spare him an irksome toil, heedless of all fame or reward, devoted himself to the task of collecting and arranging materials from books, manuscripts, and documents, and to making preliminary investigations, connected with the life of Columbus. Of this service he would not suffer the slightest notice to be given.

When his brothers were prosperous, every want of Washington's was gladly supplied,—even, as he said, for all his foolish youthful extravagances. When they were borne down by reverses, his purse, his home, his heart, was theirs. I shall never forget the tone of exultation in which he gave vent to his joy at being able to make some return for the thousand kindnesses of his prince of brothers, Ebenezer.

We may well imagine how severely the blow, which we all deplore, has fallen on the amiable and intellectual family circle which he had gathered under his roof; and how forlorn and desolate to them their home must be in the absence of him who was its light, ornament, and support, and the idol of their affections.

Mr. President, all will lament his death as a heavy loss to the nation and to the literary world; but there are thousands, here and abroad, who will mourn for him as a departed brother, who never made an enemy nor lost a friend.

REMARKS OF PROFESSOR FELTON.

Mr. President,—After the just and eloquent tributes to Mr. Irving, I rise to express, in the simplest and most informal manner, my hearty sympathy with the feeling which has called this meeting together. We seem to be standing in a field of battle. The

great leaders of thought, one after another, in rapid succession, are falling around us; the brightest stars are going down; and we, who have so long watched their courses through the heavens, find it hard to turn our gaze in the opposite direction, and to worship the new luminaries, however brilliant their rising. It is but a few months since we came together to sympathize with one another in the sudden loss of the great historian, who had done so much honor to the literature of our country by his masterly works, and who was so beloved as a friend. Later we followed to the tomb the advocate and statesman, whose vivid eloquence had so long delighted the court, the senate, and the popular assembly.

And, now, the most venerable of our men of letters, the graceful essayist, the brilliant writer of fiction, the delightful biographer and historian, the genial and generous friend, whose whole life has been loyal to the sacred Muses; the man who never had an enemy; the author who never wrote a line, which, dying, he could wish to blot,—has closed the varied scene of his labors. Ripe in age, crowned with the warmest affections of his countrymen and of the whole literary world, he has gone from among us; and we shall see his face no more. Such an event, while it cannot surprise us, excites our sensibility, and naturally touches the heart. The tears we shed are a tribute to one common humanity. It soothes our grief to listen to the warm and tender tributes, paid from every quarter, to the memory of such a man; and we bless the elevating influence of the hour, when the orator and the poet, moved by the generous impulse of kindred natures, console the common sorrow by giving fit expression to the common admiration and love.

Who did not know Washington Irving, if not personally, in his works? Who, that read anything, did not read his beautiful books? Who, that read them, ever failed to find there, not only entertainment for the passing hour, but the ennobling influence of refined and

generous thoughts pervading his mind for ever after? His English style, so pure, so delicate, so clear, so rhythmical,—the natural expression of a pure, beautiful, and harmonious soul, exquisitely attuned to all that is lovely, graceful, and noble in nature and life, —embodying a character painted in immortal colors by the genius of Plato; his imagination, so gentle and so powerful, that brightened everything it touched, as the genial sunshine kindles the landscape into beauty; his ready and delightful wit and humor, that exhilarated us, not with tumultuous laughter, except, perhaps, in those sallies of the sportive genius of his youth, so happily touched upon by Mr. Everett, but with a serene gladness of spirit; his pathos, so tender, so true, so full of feeling for every form of sorrow, toned with a sweet, lingering sadness from the unforgotten sorrow of his early days,—what a combination of attractive qualities, adorning his personal character, and clothing his literary works with an inexpressible charm!

The personal associations of all, who ever had the happiness of knowing Mr. Irving, tell the same story. I recall with pleasure the fact, that, more than twenty years ago, I was indebted to my friend Mr. Longfellow—the mover of the resolutions on your table—for a letter of introduction to him, when making a visit to New York. I shall never forget the impression he then made upon me by his pleasant and cordial manners, the sprightliness of his conversation, and the unaffected friendliness, wholly free from any air of condescension, with which he placed me at ease, conversing as gentleman with gentleman; though he was the writer, world-renowned, and I was, till then, unknown to him by name. The acquaintance thus begun was maintained by social intercourse from time to time, and by occasional correspondence; and I can truly say, that his conversation, his letters, and his published writings, have always breathed the same modest, gentle, and generous spirit, utterly free

from the jealous rivalries that sometimes mar the literary character, and harmonizing perfectly with his daily life, as portrayed to us this evening by the gallant soldier (Col. Aspinwall), who was so long his intimate and loving friend.

Allow me, Mr. President, to recall two or three little incidents, that may serve to illustrate some of the aspects of his character. The time when I saw the most of Mr. Irving was the winter of 1842, during the visit of Charles Dickens in New York. I had known this already distinguished writer in Boston and Cambridge; and, while passing some weeks with my dear and lamented friend Albert Sumner, I renewed my acquaintance with Mr. Dickens, often meeting him in the brilliant literary society which then made New York a most agreeable resort. Halleck, Bryant, Washington Irving, Davis, and others scarcely less attractive by their genius, wit, and social graces, constituted a circle not to be surpassed anywhere in the world. I passed much of the time with Mr. Irving and Mr. Dickens; and it was delightful to witness the cordial intercourse of the young man, in the flush and glory of his fervent genius, and his elder compeer, then in the assured possession of immortal renown. Dickens said, in his frank, hearty manner, that, from his childhood, he had known the works of Irving; and that, before he thought of coming to this country, he had received a letter from him, expressing the delight he felt in reading the story of little Nell; and from that day they had shaken hands *autographically* across the Atlantic. Great and varied as was the genius of Mr. Irving, there was one thing he shrank with a comical terror from attempting; and that was a *dinner-speech*. A great dinner, however, was to be given to Mr. Dickens in New York, as one had already been given in Boston; and it was evident to all, that no man but Washington Irving could be thought of to preside. With all his dread of making a speech, he was obliged to obey the uni

versal call, and to accept the painful pre-eminence. I saw him daily during the interval of preparation, either at the lodgings of Dickens, or at dinner or evening parties. I hope I showed no want of sympathy with his forebodings; but I could not help being amused with the tragi-comical distress which the thought of that approaching dinner had caused him. His pleasant humor mingled with the real dread, and played with the whimsical horrors of his own position with an irresistible drollery. Whenever it was alluded to, his invariable answer was, "I shall certainly break down!" —uttered in a half-melancholy tone, the ludicrous effect of which it is impossible to describe. He was haunted, as if by a nightmare; and I could only compare his dismay to that of Mr. Pickwick, who was so alarmed at the prospect of leading about that "dreadful horse" all day. At length, the long-expected evening arrived; a company of the most eminent persons, from all the professions and every walk of life, were assembled; and Mr. Irving took the chair. I had gladly accepted an invitation; making it, however, a condition that I should not be called upon to speak: a thing I then dreaded quite as much as Mr. Irving himself. The direful compulsions of life have since helped me to overcome, in some measure, the post-prandial fright. Under the circumstances,—an invited guest, with no impending speech,—I sat calmly, and watched with interest the imposing scene. I had the honor to be placed next but one to Mr. Irving, and the great pleasure of sharing in his conversation. He had brought the manuscript of his speech, and laid it under his plate. "I shall certainly break down," he repeated over and over again. At last, the moment arrived. Mr. Irving rose and was received with deafening and long-continued applause, which by no means lessened his apprehension. He began in his pleasant voice; got through two or three sentences pretty easily, but in the next hesitated; and, after one or two attempts to go on,

gave it up, with a graceful allusion to the tournament, and the troops of knights all armed and eager for the fray; ended with the toast, "Charles Dickens, the guest of the nation." "There," said he, as he resumed his seat under a repetition of the applause which had saluted his rising,—"there, I told you I should break down; and I've done it." There certainly never was made a shorter after-dinner speech: I doubt if there ever was a more successful one. The manuscript seemed to be a dozen or twenty pages long; but the printed speech was not as many lines. I suppose that manuscript may be still in existence; and, if so, I wish it might be published. Mr. Irving often spoke with a good-humored envy of the felicity with which Dickens always acquitted himself on such occasions. In the following spring, Irving went to England; and, being in London in May, he was, of course, invited to the annual dinner of the Literary Fund Society: but he was followed by the memory of the *Dickens Dinner*, and declined. One of the most amusing pages in the diary of Thomas Moore is the record of his conversation with Irving on the subject, and the final success of his endeavors to persuade him to go. "*That Dickens dinner*," says Moore, "which he always pronounced with strong emphasis, hammering away all the time with his right arm, *more suo,—that Dickens dinner* still haunted his imagination; and I almost gave up all hope of persuading him." But he succeeded. He closes his record with the philosophical reflection, that "it is very odd, that, while some of the shallowest fellows go on so glib and ready with the tongue, men whose minds are abounding with matter should find such difficulty in bringing it out. I found that Lockhart also had declined attending the dinner, under a similar apprehension; and only consented on condition that his health should not be given."

I felt a particular interest in the sequel of this dinner history;

for, some years later, I had a whimsical adventure with that same Literary Fund Anniversary myself. *Haud inexpertus.*

The crowning work of Mr. Irving's literary life—connecting his literary fame, as his baptismal name had from his infancy connected him, with the Father of his country—was, of course, the "Life of Washington. Every American must have hailed with no common delight a work on such a subject, from such a pen. I have read but few books in my life with so deep an interest as I read the successive volumes of that most faithful yet brilliant and picturesque biography. The genius of the author and the character of the man seemed to me to shine with peculiar brightness from its enchanting pages. In the description of life in Virginia, during Washington's youth, Irving's power of word-painting is beautifully shown. In the sketches of the frontier wars, in which the youthful hero bore so conspicuous a part; in the tragedy of Braddock's rash expedition; in the military narratives of the Revolution; in the presentation of Washington as the Chief Magistrate of the Republic; in the picture of his retirement, and his peaceful death,—everywhere we feel the inspiration of genius working upon a congenial theme; everywhere we discern a profound and loving appreciation of Washington's peerless character.

In the second volume there is an account of Washington's residence at Cambridge, as Commander-in-chief of the American Army. Mr. Irving was led into a slight mistake in reference to the General's head-quarters. The records state that the President's house was assigned him for this purpose; meaning the President of the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts: but Mr. Irving understood it to be the President of the University, and so stated. Feeling a great interest in the historical fame of the Cragie House,—the real head-quarters of the General, and at that time one of the most stately mansions in Massachusetts, having been built for a Tory

family of great wealth,—I took the liberty of calling Mr. Irving's attention to the error, and of stating to him the leading facts in the subsequent history of the house; its occupancy by Mr. Cragie, from whom it derives its present name; more recently by Mr. Everett, Mr. Sparks, Judge Phillips, Mr. Worcester, and now—and, I trust, for many years to come—by the poet Longfellow. Mr. Irving immediately wrote me a most cordial letter, and, in a pleasant note to the next volume, made the correction. When the concluding volume appeared, I was confined to my bed with severe illness. This circumstance enabled me to read it continuously to the end; and I would gladly have submitted to a much longer and more serious illness, if its pains could have been charmed away by another volume from the same magic pen. To me, under any circumstances, the last volume would have had a powerful fascination, not only because it sketched admirably the closing of Washington's great career, but because some elements of interest are interwoven here, that give delightful play to the author's gentle imagination. Nelly Custis "was now maturing into a lovely and attractive woman;" and "these were among the poetic days of Mount Vernon, when its halls echoed to the tread of lovers." The pictures of romance blend softly with the surrounding scenes; and the tender genius of Irving, neither repressed by age nor cooled by the chills of approaching dissolution, sympathizes as warmly as ever with the joys and affections of the young. But I confess that I felt the charm of this volume, enhanced by the circumstances under which I read it, more powerfully than I had been affected by either of its predecessors. As soon as I was able to hold a pen, I could not resist the impulse to write Mr. Irving a letter of thanks for the gratification and benefit I had derived from it; and as I knew that he was in feeble health, and must be exhausted by his recent labors, I begged him not to take the trouble of replying. I had written to gratify

my own feelings, to express my own sense of obligation under peculiar circumstances, and not to impose on him the burden of sending an answer.

But, notwithstanding this, only a few days elapsed before an answer came. The tone of the letter is so cordial, and the acknowledgment so warm towards me, that I have never read or shown it to any except one or two members of my own immediate family. I hesitated somewhat to bring it with me to-night; but, considering that it illustrates the peculiar sweetness and beauty of his character, I cast all personal scruples aside, and, with your permission, will read it now for the first time, hoping the members of the Society will look upon my act simply as what I intend it to be,—a most affectionate testimony to the incomparable loveliness of his temper, and the winning modesty of his judgment of himself.

SUNNYSIDE, *May* 17, 1859.

MY DEAR SIR,—I cannot sufficiently express to you how much I feel myself obliged by your very kind letter of the 12th instant, giving such a favorable notice of my last volume. I have been very much out of health of late, with my nerves in a sad state, and with occasional depression of spirits; and, in this forlorn plight, had come to feel very dubious about the volume I had committed to the press. Your letter had a most salutary and cheering effect; and your assurance, that the last volume had been to you *of more absorbing interest than either of the others*, carried a ray of joy to my heart: for I was sadly afraid the interest might be considered as falling off.

Excuse the brevity of this letter; for I am suffering to-day from the lingerings of a nervous complaint, from which I am slowly recovering: but I could not suffer another day to elapse without thanking you for correspondence which has a more balmy effect than any of my doctor's prescriptions.

With great regard,
I am, my dear Mr. Felton,
Yours very truly,
WASHINGTON IRVING.

PROFESSOR C. C. FELTON.

I happened afterwards to learn, from an intimate friend of Mr. Irving's family, that, at the moment my letter arrived, he was in a peculiar state of nervous depression, and had not yet received any of those cheering testimonies, which doubtless came to him soon after, of the entire success of the concluding volume; and this circumstance gave to my letter an exaggerated value in his judgment. That I happened to give a moment's pleasure to a man from whose genius I had enjoyed so much for many years, is a cherished recollection to me now, and will be as long as I live.

Mr. Everett, in his elegant memoir, spoke of the vast extent of Mr. Irving's literary fame. It was only last week, Mr. President, that I received a package of books from friends of mine in Athens. On looking them over, I found one with the following title, in Greek: "Christopher Columbus; a History of his Life and Voyages, according to Washington Irving" (Κατὰ τὸν Ουασιγτῶνα Ιρϵιγγ). It is the translation of an abridgment of the original work, published in Athens only last year. And who, do you think, is the translator? Why, no less a person than Mr. G. A. Aristides, a Greek of Mitylene,—Sappho's home,—who vindicates his right to the name by the *justice* of his estimate of Mr. Irving. In a well and even classically written preface, after giving an account of the other works published in Europe on the life of Columbus, he says, "In the following year (i.e., after the publication of Navarrete's 'Spanish Collections') the illustrious Washington Irving, residing in Spain, and having at his disposal the materials already prepared, composed in four volumes the 'History of the Life and Adventures of Christopher Columbus.' This work met with a warm reception; and within a few years, having been translated into the different languages, was circulated through Europe, and raised its author to the highest degree of fame."

I have been pleased to find that Aristides has been able to trans-

fer to his Greek the grace and amenity of Mr. Irving. His translation has qualities of style that would do no discredit to Xenophon himself. It is free and flowing, descriptive and luminous. In those remarkable chapters which record the anxieties and difficulties that beset the great commander in the trying days when he was approaching the coast of the hitherto undiscovered continent, and which contain such vivid descriptions of the aspects of nature, and the new wonders which, for the first time, met the eyes of the European navigators, Mr. Aristides finds his native Greek fully equal to the demand made upon its resources of expression.

I have taken the liberty, Mr. President, to give these little details, in order to throw, if I might, a few side-lights upon Mr. Irving's character. The admirable memoir by Mr. Everett, the beautiful and discriminating remarks with which Mr. Longfellow introduced the appropriate series of resolutions on your table, and the interesting details, given with so much manly tenderness of feeling, by Col. Aspinwall, left nothing to be desired; but I could not hesitate a moment to add the expression of my concurrence in the honors they have so fittingly paid to the virtues and genius of Washington Irving.

I am struck, Mr. President, by the harmony of the final scene with the gentle tenor of Mr. Irving's life. He died, as he lived, the favored of Heaven, and the beloved of men. It was a beautiful fiction of ancient poetry, that Sleep and Death were twin-brothers, the ministers of Jove. In a remarkable passage of the oldest and best of poets, one of the heroes, a son of Jupiter, having closed his career on the field of battle, is borne away by Sleep and Death to his distant home in Lycia, and buried in his native earth. This legend, a poetical fiction to the ancients, became a beautiful reality to our illustrious associate. After passing an evening in pleasant conversation with the loving circle at Sunnyside, he retired to his

chamber to sleep; but, happier than he thought, Sleep and Death —gracious ministers of God—bore him thence to his eternal home in heaven.

DR. HOLMES'S REMARKS.

I have made no formal preparation for this evening in the shape of any written line; and I should feel any elaborate paper uncalled for, after the varied and most interesting tributes to the personal and literary character of Mr. Irving, to which we have just listened. I have nothing to suggest in addition or modification, except to correct the impression that Mr. Irving *never* wrote in verse. Three instances are mentioned by Mr. Duyckinck in his notes of Irving, contained in the "Cyclopædia of American Literature," which show how slight an accident might have made a versifier of one who was born a poet. I have long remembered some lines of his, printed in an Annual, as an illustration of a picture of Stuart Newton's, and beginning,—

"Frostie age, frostie age,
Vain all thy learning;
Drowsie page, drowsie page,
Evermore turning."

If we wonder at first that he did not write oftener with the aid of rhythm and rhyme, we shall cease to wonder when we remember how natural a music flows with the unbroken current of his translucent prose.

I should not have risen, were it not that I have a few slight but recent personal reminiscences of Mr. Irving, which some may be pleased to hear. I visited New York and its vicinity last December, professedly for the purpose of delivering certain lectures, but

mainly with the intent of looking upon the face of Washington Irving before it should be veiled from our earthly eyes. The kind invitation of a friend of his and mine promised me an introduction to the home in which he was realizing his early dream of rest and peace. I learned, however, on arriving at New York, that he had been very ill of late, and that it was doubtful whether he would be in a condition to see me. At least, however, I might look upon that home of his, next to Mount Vernon, the best known and most cherished of all the dwellings in our land.

Sunnyside was *Snowyside* on that December morning; yet the thin white veil could not conceal the features of a place long familiar to me through the aid of engravings and photographs, and as stereotyped in the miraculous solid sun-pictures. The sharp-pinnacled roof, surmounted by the old Dutch weather-cock; the vine-clad cottage, with its three-arched open porch,—open on all sides, like the master's heart,—were there just as I knew them, just as thousands know them who have never trodden or floated between the banks of the Hudson.

We knocked, and were admitted; feeling still very doubtful whether Mr. Irving would be able to see us. Presently we heard a slow step, which could not be mistaken in that household of noiseless footfalls. Mr. Irving entered the room and welcomed us in the most cordial manner. He was slighter, and more delicately organized, than I had supposed; of less than average stature, I should think; looking feeble, but with kindness beaming from every feature. He spoke almost in a whisper, with effort, his voice muffled by some obstruction. Age had treated him like a friend; borrowing somewhat, as is his wont, but lending also those gentle graces which give an inexpressible charm to the converse of wise and good old men, whose sympathies keep their hearts young and their minds open.

I could not repeat the half-hour's talk I enjoyed with him, if I would. It would be pardonable in any of us, whose boyhood has breathed the atmosphere of his delicious day-dreams, to speak of the pleasure we had received from a writer whom we had so long loved unseen. It was not unnatural that he should speak with indulgent good nature to a visitor from a distant place, almost a generation younger than himself; since he was born in the same year which saw the advent in the literary world of the renowned Diedrich Knickerbocker. But it was painful to see the labor which it cost Mr. Irving to talk; and I could not forget, that, however warm my welcome, I was calling upon an invalid, and that my visit must be short. Something authorized me to allude to his illness, and my old professional instincts led me to suggest to him the use of certain palliatives which I had known to be used in some cases having symptoms which resembled his own.

After returning home I sent him some articles of this kind. Early in January, he wrote me a letter of considerable length; saying, among other things, that he had used some medicated *cigarettes* I sent him, with much relief. This letter was overflowing with expressions of kindness; but, though written in his own hand, it had no signature. I sent it back to him for his name; telling him that his was the first autograph I had ever asked for, but that I must have it at the end of such a letter. The next post brought the letter back signed.

I received about this time a communication from Mr. Irving's attached and intelligent family physician, Dr. J. C. Peters of New York, containing many details of his symptoms, and of what had been done to relieve them. Some general account of Mr. Irving's mode of life, before and after he was attacked by his then recent illness, may interest the members of the Society. [Extracts from Dr. Peters's letter were here read; which are omitted, as the full

details of Mr. Irving's case will doubtless be given to the public hereafter.] Even in his usual health, he had a "strange gipsy and cat-like way of murdering good Christian sleep," as his physician pleasantly calls it. He was in the habit of rising in the night, between twelve and four o'clock, and reading, or even writing, for half an hour or an hour. He did not get, on the average, more than four hours' sleep at night, but often took short naps in the afternoon and evening. This natural, or at least habitual, irregularity of sleep, became aggravated to extreme nervousness and restlessness after an attack of fever and ague in the autumn of 1858. He was still suffering from the effects of this when I saw him.

But beneath all these nervous disturbances lay a deeper difficulty, which was distinctly mentioned to me in his physician's letter as "enlargement of the heart," accompanied by "an obstructed circulation." Under these influences, with growing age to weaken the power of resistance, his health gradually declined, until the flame of life, which had been getting paler and feebler, was blown out, as it were, by a single breath; a gentle end of a sweet and lovely life, —such an end as Nature prepares by slow and measured approaches, and consummates with swift kindness when she grants the blessing of *euthanasia* to her favorite children.

ADDRESS OF PROFESSOR G. W. GREENE.*

"I shall not attempt to enlarge upon the subject that has been brought before us this evening with so much eloquence and taste; for what can I hope to add to this picture of the mind and the heart of the first of our prose writers by the first of our poets? But I have felt, sir, while listening to those appropriate and earnest words, what I have never but once before felt so deeply, how truly the great Roman spoke, when he said that all the arts of civilization are bound together by a common tie.

"I said, but once before. You will remember, sir, that some years ago, when Brown's fine statue of DeWitt Clinton was completed, it was placed for a few days in front of the City Hall, that all might have an opportunity of seeing it. One day, as I was watching the groups around it, and endeavoring to draw a lesson from the free expression of untaught opinion, my attention was attracted by a bright-faced little boy, who, without heeding the jostling of the passers-by, or the hum of busy voices, stood gazing upon it with an air of innocent perplexity, in which pleasure and doubt seemed to be struggling for the mastery. I made my way through the crowd, and placed myself near him in such a manner as to catch his eye for a moment. And then, after looking at the statue again with the same bewildered air, he turned to me and asked me with a timid voice, as if half ashamed of his ignorance, 'Will you please, sir, to tell me who that is?' 'Did you ever hear of DeWitt Clinton, my lad?' 'No, sir; never.' 'But you have heard of the great canal which brings the water from Lake Erie to the Hudson river, haven't you?' 'O yes, sir; and I have seen the canal boats at the wharves, many a time.' 'Well, it was De-

* At the Irving Commemoration by the N. Y. Historical Society; after Mr. Bryant's Address; April 3, 1860.

Witt Clinton that got the people to make that canal. A great many folks, who thought themselves very wise, laughed at him, and said that it would be throwing money away. But he knew better, and with all their laughing they could not laugh him out of it. And so he went on talking and writing and making speeches, till he prevailed upon the legislature to have the canal made; and now everybody sees that he was right, and thanks him for it. He did a great many other good things, too, and was member of Congress, and Mayor of New York, and Governor of the State. He has been dead a great many years, but people have not forgotten him. There is a portrait of him in the Governor's room yonder, and they have had this statue made to put over his grave at Greenwood and will help tell what a great man he was.'

"I wish you could have seen the little fellow's face as I told him my story. It seemed to me that I could almost see the electric spark as it passed from the speaking bronze into a responsive soul. I do not know his name. I have never seen him since. But years hence, when some future historian takes up his pen to trace the annals of a new life of usefulness and glory, may he not find that the birth of young ambition, the first conception of that ideal which led his hero upward to purer regions of thought, and preserved him unfaltering and untainted in the midst of disheartening collision and alluring corruption, began with this brief communication with the spirit of a great statesman, embodied and interpreted by a great artist? It was then that the words of the Roman orator came to my mind, and I could hardly refrain from repeating aloud as I turned away! *Omnes artes quae ad humanitatem pertinent habent quoddam commune vinculum et quasi cognatione quadam inter se continentur.*

"And this evening, sir, while listening to this beautiful tribute to another form of greatness from lips of kindred power, those words

came back to me again with deeper and more solemn significance. The feeling that has brought us together, pure and earnest as it is, must yield, at last, to the sure influences of time. Other graves will be opened. Other great men pass away. Other faces that are familiar cease to be seen amongst us. And although none, perhaps, will leave so deep a void, yet even that void must sooner or later be filled. How, then, shall the semblance of personal intercourse be preserved when the grave has divided, for ever, the living from the dead? How, then, if it be good for us to look upon the faces of great men; if there be inspiration in the glance of an eye that has made itself familiar with things beyond the reach of common vision; if there be—and is there not?—a peculiar thrill in the pressure of a hand that has used the sword, or the pencil, or the chisel, or the pen for the good of mankind, how shall we secure the fleeting treasure and transmit its blessing as a proof that we have prized and used it aright, to the remotest generations? Is it not here that, when the orator has spoken, and the poet has sung, and the historian has framed his enduring record, the sculptor comes with that sister art which seems to take so much from the awful interval that separates us from the great men of other days, to give form and substance to our struggling conceptions, and to break the chilling silence of the grave by an eloquence so calm, so impressive, so appropriate, and so solemn? We have, it is true, no Santa Croce to deck with cenotaph and statue; no Westminster Abbey, with its twilight shadows and subduing silence, with generation upon generation mouldering beneath its pavement, and six centuries of national glory lingering around its walls. We have not these; and grand and imposing as they are, we need them not. They belong to other forms of life, and are the fitting auxiliaries of other institutions. For us, children of a new era, inhabitants of a new world, with a history but of yester-

day, for us the open spaces on which the sun and the stars can look down; the green turf, where violets can grow in spring-time, and leaves fall with the waning year; the song of birds and the chorus of the winds, and the shadows of those groves which the poet tells us 'were God's first temples.' And our vast city, in its rapid growth, has already clasped in her embrace a spot which would seem to have been marked out by nature herself for this consecration of hallowed memories; a spot which a few years earlier might have become a favorite resort of him whose greatness and goodness we are met to commemorate, and witnessed, perhaps, the birth of some of those beautiful thoughts which have bound him for ever to the true-hearted and truth-loving wherever the language of Shakspeare and Milton is known and loved; a spot, which, in its beauty of hillside and lawn, of woodland and lake, of broad vistas and recesses of rural tranquillity, may some day, perhaps, call forth from him who has sung of our woods, and streams, and skies, one more of those immortal strains which fill the heart with holy longings and noble aspirations, and shed over the sweet aspect of nature herself a serener and more enduring loveliness.

"What, then, could be more appropriate than that some place in it should be set apart for the statues of our great poets, our great historians, our great orators, our great artists; for the heroes of thought as well as for the heroes of action? That they who have been our teachers and our comforters in our hours of labor and care, with whose spirits we have held sweet communion through the printed page or glowing canvas, should mingle, as with a living presence, in our hours of recreation, and be brought before us in the life-like presentment of sculpture, when we go forth to breathe the pure air and listen to the voices of nature.

"Then, in some green recess, where the light falls softened, and

the voice of waters is heard, and the birds love to build and sing, we may meet once more the familiar form of our Irving with the simple bearing and unconscious dignity with which he walked amongst us. The student, fresh from the pages of the Sketch Book, or the Columbus, or the Washington, will feel his pulses quicken as he gazes upon it, and strives to read in the speaking lineaments the traces of the spirit that was once united with them. And children, as they fill the air with the merry sounds that he loved, shall often pause in the midst of their sports, won by the pensive sweetness of that benignant smile, and lay down at his feet the flowers which they had gathered for mothers and sisters at home. There, on some rocky height, shall the commanding figure of our Cooper be seen, looking forth in the stern consciousness of power upon the islands and the waters which he has invested with the magic associations of inventive genius. There shall a place be found for him who, though snatched away in the first development of his strength, built on the banks of the Hudson a bower for the fairies which Shakespeare would not have rejected for his Oberon and Titania. And there, too, shall that New York boy, who, unaided but by the strong will which nature had implanted in his breast, unsustained but by the abiding trust that God would not withdraw his hand from the genius which he had bestowed, went bravely forth to contend with the great masters of art in her chosen temple, find at last, in the city of his birth, and under the skies which shed their choicest influences upon his expanding soul, a shrine from which he too can join the choral symphony which the heroes of thought have repeated from generation to generation through the long lapse of ages. How mysterious is the gift of genius! How rich the rewards of a life devoted to the service of the Good, the Beautiful, and the True."

MR. EVERETT'S ADDRESS.*

Mr. President, Ladies, and Gentlemen,

I RISE at your instance, Sir, with much pleasure, to assure you, on behalf of my friend Mr. Ticknor, and other friends from the East, who share with me the privilege of being present with you this evening, that all that New England to which you have so kindly alluded—for I know that I may speak for her on this occasion—responds most emphatically to every word that has been said, sympathizes most cordially with everything that can be felt or uttered, in honor of the bright and beloved name to which you have consecrated the hour. It does not belong to me in this presence to attempt the eulogium of Irving. On other occasions, and in other places, and while the country was still saddened by his recent loss, I claimed the mournful privilege of joining my voice to the unanimous expression of respectful and affectionate admiration which followed him to his grave. We come now only, honored by your invitation, to listen to the just, the discriminating, and eloquent tribute which your distinguished fellow-citizen, inspired by the sympathy of kindred genius, has paid to his memory, giving utterance, I am sure, to the thought and feeling of this great and approving audience.

It is, indeed, fitting, Sir, that every part of the country should unite with you in these offices of commemoration. It was one of the peculiar felicities of the literary career of Irving, that he was an equal favorite in every part of the country. Although his first productions were mainly—one of them exclusively—on local themes, and therefore, in ordinary hands, likely to excite only a local interest, these first displays of his happy talent, alternately

* At the Irving Commemoration by the New York Hist. Soc. at the Academy of Music, April 3, 1860.

playful, shrewd, and tender, were as promptly and cordially welcomed in Boston, in Philadelphia, in Baltimore, in Richmond, and in Charleston as in New York. The good taste which prescribed limits to the extravagance, the kind feeling which tempered the ridicule, the sound sense which chastened the pleasantry, and, above all, that "touch of nature which makes the whole world kin," shone out in every page of these sportive creations of the youthful humorist. These were qualities that were equally attractive in every part of the country, and they secured for him, from the outset, throughout the Union, the same popularity which he enjoyed in his native city; and this happiness attended him throughout his career. There never was a day, from his first appearance as an author down to the publication of his last volume, in which the slightest trace of locality, if I may so express myself, attached to his reputation. If from that remoteness of local position, which must exist between the different parts of a great continent, if from peculiarities having their origin in national descent or historical recollections, if from feelings of State or sectional preference, growing out of the political organization of the country—I mean its division into States and groups of States—if from any or all of these causes sectional likes and dislikes of authors, on account of their place of birth or residence, have crept into our literature (and I must say there is less of this narrow feeling than might have been expected), there never has been the slightest indication of it in reference to Mr. Irving. The East and the West, the North and the South have shown themselves equally prompt to swell the chorus of his unenvied popularity.

I own, Sir, that I look upon this universal favor which crowned Mr. Irving's literary efforts, and followed him through life, as not less happy for the country than honorable for himself. It tended to foster a nationality of the purest and noblest

kind—a nationality of mind. It is not easy to overrate the influence of such a writer as Mr. Irving over a community like ours—a reading and a thinking—but also a sensitive and impressible people; and that influence has from the first been wholesome, genial, and conciliatory, tending to form a generous public sentiment, unalloyed by local prejudice, and thus to prove, amid causes of alienation and estrangement,

"A hoop of gold to bind our brothers in."

To Mr. Irving must be awarded, as has just been stated by the distinguished eulogist of the evening, the credit of being the first entirely successful American author. The state of our literature when he came forward—rather, I should say, the almost total want of everything that could be called an American literature—entitles him to this praise. Not so much a country as the germ of a country, the entire population of the United States, at the close of the war of the Revolution, not equalling that of the State of New York at the present day; your Imperial City, Mr. Bryant has informed us, not numbering, probably, more than twenty thousand inhabitants when Mr. Irving was born; there never was a period in our history when literature stood at so low an ebb. The literary culture which our fathers brought from Europe was mostly of a theological character, and as far as general literature was concerned, there had been a decline rather than advancement. The pioneers of civilization struggling under the difficulties of colonial life, though in many respects they did wonders, could not work miracles, and it would have been a miracle if they had made independent progress in polite literature. The community could not be expected to keep itself *au courant* with the intellectual progress of Europe. Controlling circumstances in the Revolutionary age—I mean from the Stamp Act down to the Constitution—forced the mental energy of the country into poli-

tical channels. In the department of organic and constitutional polities, and in political history, some works of great ability were produced, but of a native literature, properly so-called, there was next to nothing. Books we got only by importation; those copies of Spenser, the Spectator, and Goldsmith, to which Mr. Bryant has alluded, all came from London. Neither these nor the other classics of our language were republished on this side of the Atlantic. I do not remember that the works of any one of the great English authors had been reprinted in America. Possibly some enterprising booksellers in the large cities had ventured at an edition of "Pope's Essay on Man," or "Young's Night Thoughts;" but with some trifling exception of this kind, my remark, I believe, will be found to hold true. Toward contemporary English literature there was the same indifference. Boswell's "Johnson," of which Lord Macaulay says, that "it is read beyond the Mississippi and under the Southern Cross, and is likely to be read as long as the English exists either as a living or a dead language"—the most delightful of books by the most despicable of writers—a work which would be republished at the present day in this country, before the sheets were dry from the English press, appeared in England in 1791, and was not reprinted in America till 1807. In that self-same year, at the darkest hour which preceded the dawn of our national literature, the first purple gleam of Irving's fancy began to blush in the East. Soon the sky was seen to redden and glow with the coming splendors; Hope and Expectation strained their waiting eyes towards the glorious light, and anon the sun of his resplendent genius arose, with healing in his wings, and moved with steadfast glory up to the meridian. Then like the sun on Gibeon, it stood still—a long and gladsome noon—shedding light and joy through the world of letters, till it went down at length with unclouded beams to the golden West. His fame and

his favor grew with the growth, and strengthened with the strength of the country. His early productions were the favorites of the club-room and the fireside, when we counted some seven millions of population, in 1807–1809, and those mostly this side of the Ohio. His Life of Columbus and Life of Washington have been received as classics by four times that number, whose overflow has spread to the Pacific Ocean. The most popular of our writers in his youth, when there were none to contest the palm, he led, with cheerfully acknowledged superiority, the rapidly increasing company of names not unworthy to be classed with his own, and went down to his grave in his well-earned, undisputed, unenvied pre-eminence.

Such he was to his countrymen as an American writer; nor was his career less distinguished as a member of the great republic of European, and especially of English, Letters. Milton observed, two centuries ago, that "the Italians were not forward to bestow written encomiums on men of this side the Alps." It might be said with equal truth fifty years ago, if not now, that the English were not forward to bestow written encomiums on men this side of the Atlantic. It must be owned, however, that at the beginning of this century, there had not been many occasions to put their liberality in this respect to the test. About the time that Mr. Irving's career began, it had been asked rather invidiously than unjustly, by a kind-hearted humorist, who really loved America, "Who reads an American book?" Thanks to the pen of our accomplished countryman, the question was soon reversed, and after the publication of the Sketch Book, it might with equal propriety have been asked, "Who does *not* read an American book?"

Mr. Irving, however, went abroad at the most unfavorable moment at which an American author could present himself before the British public. To the general prejudices to which I have alluded,

and all the traditional sources of anti-American feeling connected with recollections of the Revolution, were superadded the irritations of a recent war. Of all literary adventurers a young American, writing for bread, seemed the least likely to gain a favorable ear in London. Even if there were no obstacles of this kind to be surmounted, Mr. Irving's arrival in Europe coincided with the palmy days of Scott, Byron, Moore, Campbell, Rogers, Coleridge, and Wordsworth. But with calm relf-reliance of sterling merit, he fearlessly entered the Olympian race with these illustrious rivals. He entered it unknown to the great English public, with but one friend among the literary magnates of the day. But, with courage, set off by unaffected diffidence, he guided his glowing axle along the imperial course. A shout of generous applause soon cheered the gallant stranger; the brightest eyes in England rained influence on his noble adventure; more than one of the veteran candidates for public favor dropped successively behind him, and he wheeled his panting coursers in triumph to the goal, abreast of the most admired of his competitors.

It would be highly presumptuous in me, sir, after what has been said by the distinguished eulogist of the evening, and the other gentlemen who have preceded me, to pursue in any detail the noble career of our departed friend. Happy in his genius, happy in the early bloom of his reputation at home, happy, I will say, in his misfortunes, happy in the success of his miscellaneous writings, he was thrice happy in the choice of the subjects of his two great historical compositions. One might ask what theme so auspicious for the most popular of American writers, at the meridian of his fame, as the Life of Columbus, had he not found for his later years a still more auspicious theme in the Life of Washington? What unexampled felicity, not only to accompany the great Discoverer, as he went forth "weeping, but bearing precious seed," but also to

"come again with rejoicing," at the evening of the year, "bearing the full-grown sheaves" of the Father of his Country! How favored the life, beyond all ordinary measures of human happiness, opening with the year which gave a recognised national existence to the country, consecrated by the benediction of Washington on his infant head, the chief of the men of letters of his own country at home and their accredited representative abroad, and permitted to rehearse to all coming time the wondrous tale of a hidden world, called forth by the glorious Adventurer from behind the veil of waters, and the still more wondrous, still more glorious tale of that peerless name, in which all the blessings, and hopes, and destinies of that new-found world flowered out in the loveliness of their consummation.

There is yet one happiness in the life of Irving that must not be forgotten, I mean that he was permitted to enjoy while living, in all its amplitude and without deduction, his world-wide reputation. So cheerful, so unanimous a recognition of contemporary merit has perhaps never been witnessed. Success, fame, affluence, political advancement—things rarely forgiven to the candidate for public favor—raised up no enemies to him. No one envied his good fortune, no one qualified his praises, no one hated, no one maligned him. Detraction was melted into kindness by the angelic loveliness of his character, and no voice but that of respect, affection, and veneration reached his ear. So he lived and so he died. These posthumous honors of commemoration are but the echoes of those which you delighted to pay him while he sojourned among us; and the chaplet which you reverently place upon his grave, you wove for his living brow. What can be added to the happiness of such a life and such a death?

THE END.

ALLIBONE'S SKETCH OF IRVING.

SKETCH OF IRVING'S WORKS.

[The following sketch of the Life and Works of Mr. Irving is reprinted by special permission from the proof sheets of the "*Critical Dictionary of Authors of Literature*," by S. AUSTIN ALLIBONE: published by Childs & Peterson, Philadelphia. It is proper to state that the article was prepared by Mr. Allibone, and is now reprinted, without consultation with Mr. Irving or his friends. The plan of the work for which it was prepared, includes a comprehensive reference to the best contemporary criticisms, both favorable and otherwise.—*Publisher.*]

WASHINGTON IRVING, one of the most distinguished of modern authors, was born April 3, 1783, in the city of New York, in a house in William Street, between John and Fulton Streets, and not far from that venerable pile, the Old Dutch Church. This mansion—so long an object of interest to citizen and sojourner—had until within the last few years resisted the progress of "improvement," which was gradually changing the face of the neighborhood; but it too at last yielded to its fate, and in 1846 its site was occupied by one of the "Washington Stores." The father of Washington Irving was a native of Scotland, his mother an Englishwoman: and perhaps it is not entirely a matter of imagination to fancy that the national characteristics of both

parents are to be discovered in several of the productions of the author of The Sketch-Book and Bracebridge Hall.

The earliest of Mr. Irving's contributions to the Republic of Letters—a number of letters on the drama, the social customs of New York, &c.,—were published, in 1802 (under the *nom de plume* of Jonathan Oldstyle), in the Morning Chronicle, a Democratic journal, edited by the author's brother, Dr. Peter Irving. These epistles appeared in pamphlet form, without the author's consent, in the year 1824. After some attention to the study of Coke and Blackstone, the state of Mr. Irving's health caused him in 1804 to seek for that physical benefit which a change of scene and climate might naturally be expected to afford. After an absence of two years in Italy, Switzerland, France, and England, &c., he returned home in 1806, resumed his legal studies, and was admitted to the bar. In January, 1807, appeared, to the great delight of the wits of the good city of Gotham, the first number of a semi-monthly magazine, the joint production of Washington Irving, William Irving, (who contributed the poetry, and hints and sketches for some of the essays,) and James K. Paulding. This was the since-famous Salmagundi; or, The Whim-Whams and Opinions of Launcelot Langstaff and others. The amusing character of this periodical rendered it exceedingly agreeable to the town, and its popularity promised a long and profitable life; but for some reason or other it was discontinued, after the issue of the twentieth number. In 1809 was published the famous History of New York, by Diedrich Knickerbocker. The first part of this work was sketched in company with Dr. Peter Irving, who, on his departure for Europe, confided the whole to Washington, by whose humorous genius it was expanded to its present shape. Though this was one of the

first-fruits of his inventive talent, it is risking but little to affirm that in its peculiar qualities it has not been surpassed by any later efforts—successful as they have been—of its accomplished author. In 1810, Washington Irving—who had never found sufficient attraction in his legal studies to induce him to practise the profession—was admitted as a partner, with two of his brothers, in the extensive commercial establishment which they conducted at New York and Liverpool. The failure of this house in 1817, consequent upon the pecuniary difficulties which followed the treaty of peace between England and the United States, occurred when Washington was in Europe, and this reverse of fortune induced the already popular author to determine to follow literature as a profession. He had of late employed his pen but seldom: a series of naval biographies contributed to Moses Thomas's (of Philadelphia) Analectic Magazine, (of which Irving was in 1813–14 the editor,) and a biographical sketch of Thomas Campbell, prefixed to a Philadelphia edition of the works of the latter, are all of Irving's productions with which the world seems to have been favored, from the date of the publication of The Knickerbocker, in 1809, to the time of the appearance of the Sketch-Book, in 1819. The numbers of the last-named work (composed in London) were transmitted to New York for publication, were read with avidity on both sides of the water, and several of the series were soon copied by Jerdan in the London Literary Gazette, and by the editors of other periodicals.

"We are greatly at a loss [remarks the formidable Blackwood in the number for February, 1820] to comprehend for what reason Mr. Irving has thought fit to publish his Sketch-Book in America earlier than in Britain; but at all events he is doing himself great injustice by not having an edition printed here of

every number, after it has appeared in New York. Nothing has been written for a long time, for which it would be more safe to promise great and eager acceptance."—Vol. vi. 557, (by J. G. Lockhart.)

This is the article referred to by Sir Walter Scott in the letter quoted by Irving in the Preface to his revised edition of the Sketch-Book.

This was encouragement indeed,—encouragement such as many a British aspirant for literary fame would have given the copy-right of his best work to have secured. In the same month in which the above eulogy appeared, Irving published in London, under the *nom de plume* of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent^{n}, the first volume of the Sketch-Book. It was printed by John Miller, but at the author's expense; Murray, the Great Mogul of the book-trade, having declined the enterprise. The failure of Miller within a few weeks after the publication threw Irving again on the town for a publisher, and, through the friendly offices of Sir Walter Scott, Murray was induced to act in the premises. He gave the author £200, which he soon felt justified by the sale of the work in increasing to £400. The Sketch-Book was originally published in February, 1820, in one volume, but in July of the same year it appeared in two volumes,—a second edition of the first, together with a new volume. The author had now attained an extended literary reputation, both at home and abroad; and so far was he from having any difficulty in procuring a publisher, that when Bracebridge Hall or the Humorists was ready for the press in 1822, Mr. Murray was ready to offer 1,000 guineas for the copy-right without having seen the MS. He obtained the coveted prize at his offer, and subsequently gave the same author nearly twice as much (£2,000) for the Chronicle of

the Conquest of Granada, and quite three times as much (3,000 guineas) for the History of the Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus. But we anticipate. The dates of the publications of Irving's succeeding works, given to the world between the appearance of the Sketch-Book in London, in 1820, and his return to the United States in May, 1832, were as follows:

Bracebridge Hall, or, the Humorists; a Medley, by Geoffrey Crayon, Gent^{n}, Lon., 1822, 2 vols. 8vo.; N. York, 1822, 2 vols. 8vo.

Tales of a Traveller, by Geoffrey Crayon, Gent^{n}, Lon., 1824, 2 vols. 8vo.; N. York, 1824, 4 Pts. Sold to Murray (without his having seen the MS.) for 1500 guineas.

The Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus, 1828, 4 vols. 8vo.; N. York, 1828, 3 vols. 8vo.

Chronicle of the Conquest of Granada, Lon., 1829, 2 vols. p. 8vo.; Phila., 1829, 2 vols. 12mo.

Voyages of the Companions of Columbus, 1 vol. Lon., Paris and Phila., 1831.

The Alhambra, Lon., 1832, 2 vols. 8vo.; Phila., 1832, 2 vols. 12mo.

In May, 1832, as above stated, Mr. Irving returned home, after an absence of seventeen years. During this long period he had been an extensive traveller. We left him at London, superintending the publication of The Sketch-Book, in 1820. A portion of this year and of the following was spent in the city of Paris: the winter of 1822 was passed at Dresden, and that of 1825 in the south of France. In the winter of 1825–26, at the earnest request of Mr. Alexander H. Everett, American Minister to Spain,—to whom the idea was first suggested by O. Rich, Esq., American Consul at Madrid,—Mr. Irving visited Madrid for the

purpose of translating into English the valuable compilation of Navarrete, Coleccion de los Viages y Descubrimientos, &c., published at Madrid in 1825, (after Mr. Irving's arrival,) in 2 vols. 4to. Mr. Rich, indeed, had from the first set his heart—not upon a mere translation of this collection, but—upon a Life of Columbus from the pen of Washington Irving. This darling desire he was so happy as to see realized, and to him, therefore, is the world indebted for the publication of this work. Mr. Irving was the guest of this eminent bibliographer, whose name has long been honored by students in both hemispheres; and, says he,

"In his extensive and curious library I found one of the best collections extant of Spanish colonial history, containing many documents for which I might elsewhere search in vain. This he put at my absolute command, with a frankness and unreserve seldom to be met with among the possessors of such rare and valuable works; and his library has been my main resource throughout the whole of my labors."

We shall have more to quote to Mr. Rich's credit when we reach his patronymic in the future pages of our Dictionary. In this year (1826) and the following, as also in the spring of 1829, Mr. Irving made profitable journeys in the south of Spain, the results of which were given to the world in 1829, in the Chronicle of the Conquest of Granada; in 1832, in the picturesque pages of the Alhambra; in 1835, in the Legends of the Conquest of Spain; and in 1849–50, in Mahomet and his Successors.

Mr. Irving left Spain in July, 1829, and returned to London to discharge the duties connected with the Secretaryship of Legation to the American Embassy, which had been conferred upon

him during his absence. In 1830 Mr. Henry Hallam and himself were honored by the gift of the two fifty-guinea gold medals, ordered by George IV. to be presented to the two authors who should be adjudged to have attained the greatest excellence in historical composition. This high compliment to Mr. Irving was a well-deserved tribute to the merits of his History of the Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus. In the next year the degree of LL.D. was conferred upon Mr. Irving by the University of Oxford,—a testimonial which that august body is not in the habit of bestowing upon slight foundations. After an absence protracted through seventeen years, Mr. Irving at length sailed for home, and arrived in New York on the 21st day of May, 1832. To one who had conferred such imperishable renown upon the American name—even had there been nothing in the *man* to elicit that enthusiastic affection with which Washington Irving is regarded by his countrymen—no common honors were accorded. A public dinner was immediately tendered to him in New York, and the friends of early days, together with those who had grown into civic eminence and social consideration during his absence, united in paying homage to him who had conferred honor upon all. The citizens of other States also claimed their right to entertain their illustrious countryman, and nothing but that modesty which has always been a distinguishing trait of his character, prevented a series of ovations and a triumphal march through the American Republic from Boston to St. Louis and Philadelphia to New Orleans.

"We cannot refuse ourselves the pleasure," remarks one of the most eminent of his countrymen, "of bearing our humble part in the cordial welcome with which the unanimous voice of the country is now greeting the distinguished pilgrim on his re-

turn from abroad. . . . The open and hearty welcome which his fellow-citizens have given him, shows that he is best appreciated where he is best known. His reception at New York was the fairest triumph that has yet been accorded to literary desert in the New World."—EDWARD EVERETT: *Review of the Alhambra, in N. Amer. Rev.*, XXXV. 265–282.

Shortly after his return to the United States, Mr. Irving visited some of the most interesting portions of the Great West, and gratified the world with the fruits of his researches among the Indians, in the Tour on the Prairies, published in the Crayon Miscellany in 1835. Those more fond of studying the phenomena of life under another phase, found in the Recollections of Abbotsford and Newstead Abbey, and The Legends of the Conquest of Spain,—comprising the second and third volumes of the Crayon Miscellany,—sufficient to charm the imagination and delight the taste. To this collection succeeded Astoria; or, Anecdotes of an Enterprise beyond the Rocky Mountains, published in 1836, (in which the author was assisted by his nephew, Pierre M. Irving;) and the Adventures of Captain Bonneville, U. S. A., in the Rocky Mountains and the Far West, (based upon the MSS. of Capt. B. and other materials,) which was given to the world in 1837. In the years 1839 and '40, Mr. Irving contributed a number of papers to The Knickerbocker Magazine, a portion of which, with other fugitive articles, were collected in 1855, and published in a volume under the title of Wolfert's Roost. From 1842 to '46, Mr. Irving resided at Madrid as United States Minister to Spain, and, returning home in the latter year, sought a quiet retreat for his remaining years in Wolfert's Roost,—an earthly paradise which we shall not attempt to describe after the portraiture which the owner himself has given to the world.

The "strong-hold of old Baltus Van Tassel on the banks of the Hudson," so graphically sketched in the Legend of Sleepy Hollow, acquired a fresh and undying interest as the rural home of Geoffery Crayon himself. A genial picture of that quiet and charming retreat,—the modified "Wolfert's Roost,"—is given by Tuckerman, in "Homes of American Authors." Here in his bachelor-home,*—in the society of his eldest brother, and of affectionate nieces, who were to him as daughters, the author of the Sketch-Book passed his tranquil days, in calm anticipation of that change which took place on the 28th November, 1859—an event which touched the hearts not only of his friends and relatives, but of the whole reading world.

His later writings, after his retirement to "Sunnyside," were the following:—A Biography of Margaret Miller Davidson, 1841; Oliver Goldsmith, a Biography, 1849; Mahomet and his Successors, 2 vols., 1849; Life of Washington, 1855–59. He also superintended the publication of a uniform and revised edition of his whole works,—suggested and issued by the eminent publisher, Mr. Geo. P. Putnam, of New York. In this edition, "Knickerbocker" was remodelled, with much new matter—and on the other works careful revision was bestowed. The series—commenced in 1848—is comprised in 16 vols.; and for these the demand, up to April 1860, had absorbed about 30,000 sets, or 480,000 volumes. Of the Life of Washington, in 5 vols. (making 21 of the whole series), about 45,000 sets, or 225,000 vols. had been called for.†

* The reason why it remained so—while its occupant was so eminently affectionate in disposition and so domestic in tastes and habits, is touchingly alluded to by Mr. Bryant in his Birth-Day Discourse.

† An illustrated edition of the Life of Washington was also issued by Putnam, in 5 vols. imp. 8vo., and 110 copies with proof plates in quarto. Some of the other works on large paper contain illustrations by Darley and others —and a very handsome edition is now (1860) in progress.

The sale of these works abroad has been very large. The only European editions in which the author's pecuniary interests were recognised, were those of Mr. John Murray and Mr. Bentley—the latter publishing Bonneville, Astoria, and the Alhambra: and both publishers made liberal returns to the author. The absence of *legal* copyright on American works in England, however, having been more recently ascertained, cheap rival editions in large numbers were issued (1846–50) by Routledge, Smith, Tegg, and Bohn. Galignani and Baudry printed editions in Paris; and Tauchnitz, of Leipsig, includes them in his series of "British Authors."

And now, in accordance with our promise in the preface to this work,—a promise which the preceding pages will prove we have neither forgotten nor delayed to fulfil,—we shall proceed to adduce, as we have done in other instances, the verdicts which eminent critics have passed upon the literary characteristics of the subject of our notice. In many preceding cases we have been obliged to omit much more than we had space to quote of interesting and truly valuable criticism; but, when we commence the pleasing task of citing opinions respecting the productions of Washington Irving, we are literally oppressed by the *embarras de richesses*. As we glance around our library-shelves, and behold the mass of materials which we have been for years collecting on this theme, (as we have on the same scale, though not to the same extent, collected for the illustration of many thousands of other writers,) we feel it to be no exaggeration to say that we could readily fill a goodly octavo volume with the matter which our space will oblige us to reject. Be it our care, therefore, to make that judicious selection from the materials which invite our research, which shall truly represent the impression which this distinguished writer has made upon the present generation, and

the one which first sat in judgment on the early fruits of his literary toil.

1. SALMAGUNDI; OR, THE WHIM-WHAMS AND OPINIONS OF LAUNCELOT LANGSTAFF, ESQ., AND OTHERS, January, 1807, to January, 1808:

"We all remember the success of Salmagundi, to which he was a large and distinguished contributor; with what rapidity and to what extent it circulated through America; how familiar it made us with the local pleasantry and the personal humors of New York, and what an abiding influence it has had in that city, by forming a sort of school of wit of a character somewhat marked and peculiar, and superior to every thing our country has witnessed, except, perhaps, that of the wits of The Anarchiad in Connecticut."—EDWARD EVERETT: *N. Amer. Rev.*, xv. 206, July, 1822.

"We have no hesitation in saying at the outset, that we consider the good papers of Salmagundi, and the greater part of Knickerbocker, superior to the Sketch-Book. . . . It [Salmagundi] was exceedingly pleasant morning or after-dinner reading, never taking up too much of a gentleman's time from his business and pleasures, nor so exalted and spiritualized as to seem mystical to his far-reaching vision. . . . Though its wit is sometimes forced, and its serious style sometimes false, upon looking it over we have found it full of entertainment, with an infinite variety of characters and circumstances, and with that amiable, good-natured wit and pathos which shows that the heart has not grown hard while making merry of the world."—RICHARD H. DANA, SR.: *N. Amer. Rev.*, ix. 323, 334, 344–345, Sept. 1819.

"The better pieces are written in Mr. Irving's best manner. Take it altogether, it was certainly a production of extraordinary merit, and was instantaneously and universally recognized as such by the public. It wants, of course, the graver merits of the modern British Collections of Essays; but for spirit, effect, and

actual literary value, we doubt whether any publication of the class since The Spectator, upon which it is directly modelled, can fairly be put in competition with it."—ALEXANDER H. EVERETT: *N. Amer. Rev.*, xxviii. 116, Jan. 1829.

"It was in form and method of publication imitated from The Spectator, but, in details, spirit, and aim, so exquisitely adapted to the latitude of New York, that its appearance was hailed with a delight hitherto unknown: it was, in fact, a complete triumph of local genius."—HENRY T. TUCKERMAN: *Sketch of Amer. Lit.*

"In this work we are introduced to the watering-places, balls, elections, reviews, and coteries of the daughter-country, and particularly of New York, the centre of its fashion, in a style of unsparing and broad humor, infinitely outdoing any liberties which Mathews thought fit to take with his hospitable entertainers, and reflecting some credit on the good temper which was shown by its reception. . . . That Salmagundi owes its principal pretensions to Mr. Irving's exertions, we are the more inclined to conclude from the evidence of a work in which, not very long afterwards, he tried his strength single-handed, under the title of Knickerbocker's Humorous History of New York."—*Lon. Quar. Rev.*, xxxi. 474, 475, March, 1825.

"The production of Paulding, Irving, Verplanck,* and perhaps of others, in partnership: the papers of Paulding are more sarcastic, ill-natured, acrimonious,—bitter,—than those of Irving; but quite as able: those by Verplanck we do not know: we have only *heard* of him as one of the writers: it is a work in two volumes duodecimo; essays, after the manner of Goldsmith,—a downright, secret, labored, continual imitation of him,—abounding, too, in plagiarisms: the title is from our English FLIM-FLAMS: oriental papers, the little man in black, &c. &c., from the Citizen of the World: parts are capital: as a whole, the work is quite superior to any thing of the kind which this age has produced."—*Blackw. Mag.*, xvii. 61, Jan. 1825.

* An error: Mr. Verplanck had no part in the work.—*Ed.*

2. KNICKERBOCKER'S HISTORY OF NEW YORK, 1809.

It was to this work that Irving owed his fortunate introduction to Sir Walter Scott. Campbell was aware of the delight with which it was read by the Great Unknown, and therefore gave the author a letter to Abbotsford. The young American arrived at Selkirk on the 29th of August, 1817.

"I had come down from Edinburgh," he tells us, "partly to visit Melrose Abbey and its vicinity, but chiefly to get a sight of the 'mighty minstrel of the North.' I had a letter of introduction to him from Thomas Campbell, the poet, and had reason to think, from the interest he had taken in some of my earlier scribblings, that a visit from me would not be deemed an intrusion. On the following morning, after an early breakfast, I set off in a post-chaise for the Abbey. On the way thither I stopped at the gate of Abbotsford, and sent the postillion to the house with the letter of introduction and my card, on which I had written that I was on my way to the ruins of Melrose Abbey, and wished to know whether it would be agreeable to Mr. Scott (he had not yet been made a baronet) to receive a visit from me in the course of the morning."—*Irving's Abbotsford.*

Mr. Lockhart shall tell us in what spirit this "modest approach" was received:

"Scott's family well remember the delight with which he received this announcement: he was at breakfast, and sallied forth instantly, dogs and children after him as usual, to greet the guest and conduct him in person from the highway to the door."—*Lockhart's Life of Scott.*

Mr. Irving must be permitted to take up the thread:

"Before Scott had reached the gate, he called out to me in a hearty tone, welcoming me to Abbotsford, and asking news of Campbell. Arrived at the door of the chaise, he grasped me

warmly by the hand: 'Come, drive down, drive down to the house,' said he; 'ye're just in time for breakfast, and afterwards ye shall see all the wonders of the Abbey.'

"I would have excused myself on the plea of having already made my breakfast. 'Hout, man!' cried he; 'a ride in the morning in the keen air of the Scotch hills is warrant enough for a second breakfast!'"—*Ubi supra.*

Thus graphically is sketched, by the gratified stranger, his first interview with the tried and loving friend of many years; and this lifelike description is familiar, or should be so, to all. But it has been the happy lot of the writer of these pages to hear from Irving's own lips—while the generous tear of affection quivered in his eye—the pathetic account of his *last* interview with his friend, a few months before the lamentations of nations over his grave testified to the strong hold which he had gained upon the hearts of his readers in every land. But we are anticipating here: should we ever record the deeply-interesting narration to which we refer, it will be more appropriately introduced in our life of the author of Waverley. It is worth mentioning in this connection, that in a letter from Scott to John Richardson, dated 22d Sept. 1817, he remarks:

"When you see Tom Campbell, tell him with my best love that I have to thank him for making me known to Mr. Washington Irving, who is one of the best and pleasantest acquaintances I have made this many a day."

Every American who has been abroad, and mingled at all in the polite circles of Europe, can testify that Sir Walter Scott here speaks that only which thousands will gladly endorse. We quote one instance which we find recorded in Mr. N. P. Willis's agreeable Pencillings by the Way. He is describing an evening party at the Countess of Blessington's:

"Nearest me sat Smith, the author of Rejected Addresses,—a hale, handsome man, apparently fifty, with white hair, and a very nobly-formed head and physiognomy. . . . Among other things, he talked a great deal of America, and asked me if I knew our distinguished countryman, Washington Irving. I had never been so fortunate as to meet him. 'You have lost a great deal,' he said, 'for never was so delightful a fellow. I was once taken down with him into the country by a merchant to dinner. Our friend stopped his carriage at the gate of his park, and asked us if we would walk through his grounds to the house. Irving refused, and held me down by the coat, so that we drove on to the house together, leaving our host to follow on foot. "I make it a principle," said Irving, "never to walk with a man through his own grounds. I have no idea of praising a thing whether I like it or not. You and I will do them to-morrow morning by ourselves."' The rest of the company had turned their attention to Smith as he began his story, and there was a universal inquiry after Mr. Irving. Indeed, the first questions on the lips of every one to whom I am introduced as an American are of him and Cooper."

Tom Moore's warm affection for the author of the Sketch-Book is no secret to those who have read the entertaining Diary of the former, recently published by Lord John Russell. We quote from one of the poet's entries a *bon mot* of Irving's, which has amused us not a little:

"April 10, 1830.—Forgot to mention in its place Irving's description of the evening at Horace Twiss's, (the evening of the day he wanted me to meet the Duke of Wellington.) But few people had come; and 'there was Twiss,' said Irving, 'with his two great men, the Duke and the Chancellor, just like a spider that has got two big flies, and does not know what to do with them.'"

But, the reader will query, how had Scott become acquainted

with the literary merits of the young American?—for such acquaintance he seems to have had. Lockhart shall again be our spokesman:

"Scott had received The History of New York by Knickerbocker, shortly after its appearance in 1812, from an accomplished American traveller, Mr. Brevoort; and the admirable humor of this early work had led him to anticipate the brilliant career which its author has since run. Mr. Thomas Campbell, being no stranger to Scott's high estimate of Irving's genius, gave him a letter of introduction," &c.

It so happens—though it is hardly an accident, either—that we have before us a fac-simile of Scott's letter to Mr. Henry Brevoort, acknowledging the receipt of Knickerbocker's History of New York; and it is strictly to our present purpose—the citation of opinions upon Irving's works—to quote this epistle for the gratification of the reader:

"*My Dear Sir*:—I beg you to accept my best thanks for the uncommon degree of entertainment which I have received from the most excellently-jocose history of New York. I am sensible that as a stranger to American parties and politics, I must lose much of the concealed satire of the piece; but I must own that, looking at the simple and obvious meaning only, I have never read any thing so closely resembling the style of Dean Swift as the annals of Diedrich Knickerbocker. I have been employed these few evenings in reading them aloud to Mrs. S. and two ladies who are our guests, and our sides have been absolutely sore with laughing. I think, too, there are passages which indicate that the author possesses power of a different kind, and [he] has some touches which remind me much of Sterne. I beg you will have the kindness to let me know when Mr. Irving takes pen in hand again, for assuredly I shall expect a very great treat,

which I may chance never to hear of but through your kindness. Believe me, dear sir,

"Your obliged and humble servant,

"WALTER SCOTT.

"Abbotsford, 23d April, 1813."

We have already seen that it was to the friendly offices of Scott that Irving was indebted for the happy circumstance which made John Murray his publisher, and the handsome tribute to both these gentlemen which appears in the Preface to the revised edition of The Sketch-Book (New York, 1848), must not be omitted in this place:

"From that time [the publication of The Sketch-Book in 1820] Murray became my publisher, conducting himself in all his dealings with that fair, open, and liberal spirit which had obtained for him the well-merited appellation of the Prince of Booksellers. Thus, under the kind and cordial auspices of Sir Walter Scott, I began my literary career in Europe; and I feel that I am but discharging, in a trifling degree, my debt of gratitude to the memory of that golden-hearted man, in acknowledging my obligations to him. But who of his literary contemporaries ever applied to him for aid or counsel, that did not experience the most prompt, generous, and effectual assistance?"

We continue the quotation of opinions:

"Equally or more admired [than Salmagundi] was Knickerbocker's History of New York, a work to be compared with any thing of the kind in our language; a book of unwearying pleasantry, which, instead of flashing out, as English and American humor is wont, from time to time, with long and dull intervals, is kept up with a true French vivacity from beginning to end; a book which, if it have a fault, has only that of being too pleasant, too sustained a tissue of merriment and ridicule."—EDWARD EVERETT: *N. Amer. Rev.*, XV. 206, July, 1822.

"It has the same faults and same good qualities in its style, its wit and humor; and its characters are evidently by the same hand as the leading ones in Salmagundi, though not copies from them. They are perfectly fresh and original, and suited to their situations. Too much of the first part of the first volume is laborious and up-hill; and there are places, here and there, in the last part, to which there is the same objection. Our feelings seldom flag in the second."—RICHARD H. DANA, SR.: *N. Amer. Rev.*, ix. 345, Sept. 1819.

"This we consider as equal to the best, and in some respects perhaps superior to any other, of our author's productions, [viz.: Oldstyle, Salmagundi, Naval Biographies, The Sketch-Book, Bracebridge Hall, Tales of a Traveller, and Columbus.] It is the one which exhibits most distinctly the stamp of real inventive power, the true test, as we have hinted, of genius. The plan, though simple enough, and when hit upon sufficiently obvious, is entirely original."—ALEX. H. EVERETT: *N. Amer. Rev.*, xxviii. 117–118, Jan. 1829.

"The most elaborate piece of humor in our literature,—Irving's facetious history of his native town."—HENRY T. TUCKERMAN: *Sketch of Amer. Lit.*

"Of the point of many of the allusions contained in this political satire, partaking somewhat of the style of Swift's Tale of a Tub, and in which more than one President of the United States figures, we very much lament that we are not fully competent to judge. To us it is a tantalizing book, of which all that we understand is so good, and affords us so much pleasure, even through an imperfect acquaintance with it, that we cannot but conclude that a thorough knowledge of the whole point in every part would be a treat indeed."—*Lon. Quar. Rev.*, xxxi. 475, March, 1825.

Another English authority does not consider that Irving was so invariably allegorical as the critic just quoted seems to suppose:

"By nine readers out of ten, perhaps, Knickerbocker is read as a piece of generous drollery,—nothing more. Be it so. It will wear the better. The design of Irving himself is not always clear, nor was he always undeviating in his course. Truth or fable, fact or falsehood,—it was all the same to him, if a bit of material came in his way. In a word, we look upon this volume of Knickerbocker—though it *is* tiresome, though there *are* some wretched failures in it, a little overdoing of the humorous, and a little confusion of purpose throughout—as a work honorable to English literature, manly, bold, and so *altogether original*, without being extravagant, as to stand alone among the labors of men."—*American Writers*, *No.* 4, *in Blackw. Mag.*, xvii. 62, Jan. 1825.

"To speak the plain truth, Diedrich Knickerbocker is, after all, our favorite. There is more *richness* of humor, and there is more strength of language too, in these earlier efforts."—*Ibid.*, xiv. 504, Nov. 1823.

"The whole book is a *jeu-d'esprit*, and perhaps its only fault is, that no *jeu-d'esprit* ought to be quite so long as to fill two closely-printed volumes."—*Ibid.*, vii. 361, July, 1820, (by J. G. Lockhart.)

The eloquent historian of the Conquest of Mexico, in a dissertation upon the Right of Title by Discovery, after referring the reader to some of the great legal luminaries of different countries,—to Vattel, Kent, and Wheaton,—concludes with the following allusion to the erudite essay of our ancient friend, the chronicler of the early fortunes of Nieuw-Nederlandts:

"If it were not treating a grave discussion too lightly, I should crave leave to refer the reader to the renowned Diedrich Knickerbocker's History of New York, (book 1, chap. 5,) for a luminous disquisition on this knotty question. At all events, he will find there the popular arguments subjected to the test of ridicule,—a test showing, more than any reasoning can, how

much, or rather how little, they are really worth."—*Prescott's Hist. of the Conquest of Mexico*, 23d. ed., Bost., 1855, ii. 33, n.

For further notices of Knickerbocker's History of New York, see Lon. Month. Rev., xciv. 67; Lon. Athen., 1832, 458; Knickerbocker Mag., iii. 1; GRAHAME, JAMES, p. 717, in this Dictionary.

3. THE SKETCH-BOOK, 1819–20.

"I have glanced over the Sketch-Book. It is positively beautiful, and increases my desire to crimp you, if it be possible." —*Sir Walter Scott to Washington Irving*, offering him the editorship (with a salary of £500 per annum) of a projected Edinburgh weekly literary periodical. This offer was gratefully declined by Irving.

"But, though it is primarily for its style and composition that we are induced to notice this book, it would be quite unjust to the author not to add, that he deserves very high commendation for its more substantial qualities; and that we have seldom seen a work that gave us a more pleasing impression of the writer's character, or a more favorable one of his judgment and taste. . . . It seemed fair and courteous not to stint a stranger on his first introduction to our pages; and what we have quoted, we are persuaded, will justify all that we have said in his favor. . . . We have found the book in the hands of most of those to whom we have thought of mentioning it."—LORD JEFFREY: *Edin. Rev.*, xxxiv. 161, 168, 176, Aug. 1820.

"Few recent publications have been so well received in England as the Sketch-Book. Several of the Waverley novels have passed through fewer editions than this agreeable work, and the journals of most consequence have paid the highest compliments to its merit. We are nevertheless free to confess, that we think The Sketch-Book, as a whole, inferior to the author's earlier

writings.—EDWARD EVERETT: *N. Amer. Rev.*, xv. 208, July, 1822.

"We will be open with him, and tell him that we do not think the change is for the better. He appears to have lost a little of that natural run of style for which his lighter writings were so remarkable. He has given up something of his direct, simple manner, and plain phraseology, for a more studied, periphrastical mode of expression. He seems to have exchanged words and phrases which were strong, distinct, and definite, for a genteel sort of language, cool, less definite, and general. It is as if his mother-English had been sent abroad to be improved, and, in attempting to become accomplished, had lost too many of her home qualities. . . . The Sketch-Book is extremely popular, and it is worthy of being so. Yet it is with surprise that we have heard its style indiscriminately praised. . . . Had we thought less highly of his powers, we should have said less about his errors. Did we not take delight in reading him, we should have been less earnest about his mistakes. . . . He is a man of genius, and able to bear his faults."—RICHARD H. DANA, SR.: *N. Amer. Rev.*, ix. 348, 350, 356, Sept. 1819.

"The characteristics of the Sketch-Book are essentially the same with those of the preceding work; but, with somewhat more polish and elegance, it has somewhat less vivacity, freshness, and power. This difference constitutes the distinction between Mr. Irving's first and second manner, the latter of which is preserved in all his subsequent publications, excepting the one immediately before us [Life of Columbus]. Of these two manners, the one or the other may perhaps be preferred by different readers, according to their different tastes. We incline ourselves to the former, conceiving that spirit and vigor are the highest qualities of style, and that the loss of any merit of this description is but poorly compensated by a little additional finish."—ALEX. H. EVERETT: *N. Amer. Rev.*, xxviii. 119, Jan. 1829.

"His stories of Rip Van Winkle and Sleepy Hollow are per-

haps the finest pieces of original fictitious writing that this country has produced, next to the works of Scott."—*Chambers's Cyc. Eng. Lit.*, Edin., 1844, ii. 594.

Dr. Dibdin, a Nestor among critics, cannot find words sufficiently strong in which to express his admiration of The Sketch-Book. Referring to Mr. Roscoe, he remarks:

"This is probably the last time that his name will adorn these pages; and in taking leave of it, how can I better express my feelings than in the beautiful language of the author of The Sketch-Book?"—*Library Companion*, ed. 1825, 542.

Again:

"I know of few passages—indeed, I know of none—which so completely and so deliciously (if I may so speak) describe the comforts of a well-stored library as the following, from the author of The Sketch-Book: 'When all that is worldly turns to dross around us, these only retain their steady value,' &c."

The doctor quotes to the end of the next paragraph, and then demands,

"Can sentiment (I ask) be purer, or language more harmonious, than this?"—*Ubi supra*, p. 544. See also p. 346.

"The Sketch-Book is a timid, beautiful work; with some childish pathos in it; some rich, pure, bold poetry; a little squeamish, puling, lady-like sentimentality; some courageous writing, some wit, and a world of humor, so happy, so natural, so altogether unlike that of any other man, dead or alive, that we would rather have been the writer of it, fifty times over, than of every thing else that he has ever written. The touches of poetry are every where; but never where we would look for them. Irving has no passion: he fails utterly in true pathos,—cannot speak as if he were carried away by any thing. He is always thoughtful; and, save when he tries to be fine or sentimental,

always natural. The '*dusty splendor*' of Westminster Abbey, the '*ship staggering*' over the precipices of the ocean, the shark '*darting, like a spectre, through the blue waters*,'—all these things are poetry, such poetry as never was, never will be, surpassed. We could mention fifty more passages,—epithets of power, which no mere *prose* writer would have dared, under any circumstances, to use."—*American Writers*, *No.* 4, *in Blackw. Mag.*, xvii. 65, Jan. 1825.

"We trust some arrangement has been entered into by virtue of which the succeeding numbers of this exquisite miscellany may be early given to the English public; who, we are sure, are, at least, as much inclined to receive them well as the American. Mr. Washington Irving is one of our first favorites among the English writers of this age, and he is not a bit the less so for having been born in America."—*Blackw. Mag.*, vii. 361, July, 1820, (by J. G. Lockhart.)

We have already quoted Lockhart's opinion of The Sketch-Book in a preceding page, *q. v.* See also Christopher North's Noctes Ambrosianæ, July, 1822, and May, 1823.

"Of the merit of his Knickerbocker and New York Stories, we cannot pretend to judge. But in his Sketch-Book and Bracebridge Hall he gives us very good American copies of our British Essayists and Novelists, which may be very well on the other side of the water, or as proofs of the capabilities of the national genius, but which might be dispensed with here, where we have to boast of the originals. Not only Mr. Irving's language is with great taste and felicity modelled on that of Addison, Goldsmith, Sterne, or Mackenzie, but the thoughts and sentiments are taken at the rebound, and, as they are brought forward at the present period, want both freshness and probability. Mr. Irving's writings are literary *anachronisms*. He comes to England for the first [the second] time; and, being on the spot, fancies himself in the midst of those characters and manners which he had read of in

The Spectator and other approved authors, and which were the only idea he had hitherto formed of the parent-country. Instead of looking around to see what *we are*, he sets to work to describe us as we *were*, at second-hand."—*Hazlitt's Spirit of the Age.*

As this charge—of literary anachronism—has often been urged against some of the graphic scenes depicted in The Sketch-Book and Bracebridge Hall, it is only just to allow the author to be heard in his own defence:

"At the time of the first publication of this paper [The Christmas Dinner, in the Sketch-Book], the picture of an old-fashioned Christmas in the country was pronounced by some as out of date. The author had afterwards an opportunity of witnessing almost all the customs above described, existing in unexpected vigor in the skirts of Derbyshire and Yorkshire, where he passed the Christmas holidays. The reader will find some account of them in the author's account of his sojourn in Newstead Abbey."—*Note to revised edit. of The Sketch-Book*, New York, 1848, p. 298.

We lack space to quote Mr. Irving's description of the primitive customs which he found in full and honored observance in different parts of England,—customs which, as he remarks,

"Have only been pronounced obsolete by those who draw their experience merely from city life. . . . It has been deemed that some of the anecdotes of holiday customs given in my preceding writings, related to usages which have entirely passed away. Critics who reside in cities have little idea of the primitive manners and observances which still prevail in remote and rural neighborhoods."—*Crayon Miscellany: Newstead Abbey*, N. York, 1848, 298, 299.

Mr. Irving's comments are fully endorsed by an eminent English authority:

"The accuracy of his pictures of old English customs and sports, which he represents as flourishing under the influence of the benevolent squire, has been questioned, we know, by suburban readers: in our opinion, and according to our experience, there is nothing too highly colored in them. [The writer then proceeds to prove his position.] We think, therefore, that, far from exceeding the limits of probability in this respect, Mr. Irving has hardly made the full use of northern customs which was really open to him. Nor can we see any thing overdrawn in the characters themselves."—*Lon. Quar. Rev.*, xxxi. 476, 477, March, 1825.

The Dublin University Magazine remarks, in the same strain:

"Bracebridge Hall is the only account we have which gives any thing like a true picture of the life of an English country gentleman of our own day."—May, 1835, 554.

Other reviews of The Sketch-Book appeared in the Lon. Quar. Rev., xxv. 50; Lon. Month. Rev., xciii. 198; Edin. Month. Rev., iv. 303. In our life of Lord Byron, p. 322 of this Dictionary, will be found an interesting account of the enthusiastic admiration expressed by his lordship of The Sketch-Book and its author.

Before we leave our subject, we must not forget to copy an entry in Moore's Diary, in which the success of The Sketch-Book at its first appearance is referred to:

"Dined with McKay at the *table-d'hote*, at Meurice's, for the purpose of being made known to Mr. Washington Irving, the author of the work which has lately had success, The Sketch-Book; a good-looking and intelligent-mannered man."—Paris, Dec. 21, 1820.

4. Bracebridge Hall; or, the Humorists, 1822:

"The great charm and peculiarity of his work consists now,

as on former occasions, in the singular sweetness of the composition, and the mildness of the sentiments,—sicklied over perhaps a little, now and then, with that cloying heaviness into which unvaried sweetness is so apt to subside. The rhythm and melody of the sentences is certainly excessive: as it not only gives an air of mannerism, but raises too strong an impression of the labor that must have been bestowed, and the importance which must have been attached to that which is, after all, but a secondary attribute to good writing. It is very ill-natured in us, however, to object to what has given us so much pleasure; for we happen to be very intense and sensitive admirers of those soft harmonies of studied speech in which this author is apt to indulge himself; and have caught ourselves, oftener than we shall confess, neglecting his excellent matter, to lap ourselves in the liquid music of his periods, and letting ourselves float passively down the mellow falls and windings of his soft-flowing sentences, with a delight not inferior to that which we derive from fine versification."—Lord Jeffrey: *Edin. Rev.*, xxxvii. 338–339, Nov. 1822.

"We have no hesitation in pronouncing Bracebridge Hall quite equal to any thing which the present age of English literature has produced in this department. In saying this, we class it in the branch of essay-writing. . . . Besides the episodical tables, he has given us admirable sketches of life and manners, highly curious in themselves, and rendered almost important by the good-natured mock gravity, the ironical reverence, and lively wit, with which they are described. We can scarce express the delight with which we turn to the definite images such a work excites, from the vagueness and generality of ordinary story-writing, where personages without prototypes in any society on earth speak a language learned out of books, without a trait of nature, life, or truth."—Edward Everett: *N. Amer. Rev.*, xv. 209, 223–224, July, 1822.

"Bracebridge Hall certainly does not possess the spirit of The Sketch-Book."—*Blackw. Mag.*, xi. 688, June, 1822.

"STOUT GENTLEMAN—very good, and a pretty fair account of a real occurrence, [see Note at bottom of the page;] STUDENT OF SALAMANCA—beneath contempt; Irving has no idea of genuine romance, or love, or any thing else. we believe, that ever seriously troubles the blood of men: ROOKERY—struck off in a few hours; contrary to what has been said, Irving does not labor as people suppose—he is too indolent—given too much, we *know*, to revery: DOLPH HEYLIGER; THE HAUNTED HOUSE; STORM-SHIP—all in the fashion of his early time; perhaps—we are greatly inclined to believe—perhaps the remains of what was meant for Salmagundi or Knickerbocker: the rest of the two volumes quite unworthy of Irving's reputation."—*American Writers, No.* 4, *in Blackw. Mag.*, xvii. 66, Jan. 1825.

"In spite, however, of the pleasure which Bracebridge Hall has afforded us, we can see nothing in it which might not have been compressed into the space of one volume. The *make-weights* (for we can give them no other name) which are thrown in to round off the work more properly belong to Mr. Irving's recent publication, the Tales of a Traveller; in fact they are, for the most part, told by the same imaginary narrators, and we shall, therefore, consider them under the same head."—*Lon. Quar. Rev.*, xxxi. 481–482, March, 1825.

See also Moore's Diary, March 19, 1821.

5. TALES OF A TRAVELLER, 1824.

"I have been miserably disappointed in the Tales of a Traveller." In this strain commences Timothy Tickler's review of the Tales, and he proceeds to abuse them terribly: the more so, he intimates, from the fact that

"Few people have admired Mr. Irving more than myself, few have praised him more, and certainly few wish him and his career better than I do at this moment."—*Blackw. Mag.*, xvi. 294, 297, Sept. 1824.

In the same periodical (xvii. 66–67, American Writers, No. 4) the Tales are quite as severely handled, but the critic dismisses the author with many civil words and a hearty benediction:

You—Geoffrey Crayon—have great power,—original power. We rejoice in your failure now, because we believe that it will drive you into a style of original composition, far more worthy of yourself. Go to work. Lose no time. Your foundations will be the stronger for this uproar. You cannot write a novel, a poem, a true tale, or a tragedy. You *can* write another SKETCH-BOOK worth all that you have ever written, if you will draw out from yourself. You have some qualities that no other living writer has,—a bold, quiet humor, a rich, beautiful mode of painting without caricature, a delightful, free, happy spirit: make use of them. We look to see you all the better for this trouncing. God bless you! Farewell."

The reviewer in the London Quarterly (vol. xxxi. 481–487, March, 1825) finds hardly any thing to commend in the Tales of a Traveller, save the autobiography of Buckthorne:

"It is with great pleasure that we turn from productions which Mr. Irving honestly confesses to be the sweepings of his Scrap-book, to the tale of Buckthorne, whose adventures, together with those of his friends, occupy the second division of the Tales. In this instance, finding the contents of the said Scrap-book run short, he has been driven to tax his own invention in good earnest, and the result is excellent. From the evidence of this tale, which abounds in point and incident, it seems probable to us that he might as a novelist prove no contemptible rival to Goldsmith, whose turn of mind he very much inherits, and of whose style he particularly reminds us in the life of Dribble. Like him, too, Mr. Irving possesses the art of setting ludicrous perplexities in the most irresistible point of view, and we think equals him in the variety, if not in the force, of his humor. . . . After the evidence of Mr. Irving's powers afforded by the last-quoted passage,

he must in future be true to his own reputation throughout, and correct the habits of indolence which so considerable a part of the Tales of a Traveller evince. The indulgence which he so fairly deserved at his outset, as an ingenious stranger intuitively proficient in the style and ideas of the mother-country, must now cease, and he must be considered in future as not only admitted to the full freedom and privileges of the English guild of authorship, but amenable also at the same time, as an experienced craftsman, to its most vigorous statutes. We may congratulate him on the rank which he has already gained, of which the momentary caprice of the public cannot long deprive him; and with hearty good will, playfully, but we hope not profanely, we exclaim, as we part with him, 'Very pleasant hast thou been to me, my brother Jonathan.'"—*Lon. Quar. Rev.*, xxxi. 483–484, 486–487.

But perhaps the most severe of all the reviews of the Tales of a Traveller appeared in the Westminster Review (ii. 334), then in the first blossom of its youth. Geoffrey Crayon's courteous notices of the English nobility, and his equally creditable disgust at the sanguinary horrors of the French Revolution, excited the ire of the democratic critic to an uncontrollable pitch. Even the author's admiring friend, Tom Moore, seems to have had but little hope for the success of the Tales:

"Irving and I set out for the cottage between ten and eleven. Took Irving after dinner to show him to the Starkeys, but he was sleepy, and did not open his mouth: the same at Elwyn's dinner. Not strong as a lion, but delightful as a domestic animal. Walked him over this morning to call on Lord Lansdowne, (come down in consequence of Lord King's illness,) who walked part of the way back with us. Read me some part of his new work. Tales of a Traveller. Rather tremble for its fate. Murray has given him £1,500 for it; might have had, I think, £2,000."—June 17, 1824.

6. THE LIFE AND VOYAGES OF CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS, 1828:

"Venient annis
Sæcula seris, quibus, Oceanus
Vincula rerum laxet, et ingens
Pateat tellus, Typhisque novos
Detegat Orbes, nec sit terris
Ultima Thule."—SENECA: *Medea.*

"The author, having resided for some years past in Madrid, and enjoyed access to the archives of the Spanish Government, as well as to many private Libraries, has been enabled to weave into this work many curious facts, hitherto unknown, concerning the History of Columbus."

The existence of a new world beyond the Atlantic was firmly believed by many of the ancients, as is abundantly proved by numerous passages in the classics:

"None of the intimations [remarks Mr. Prescott] are so precise as that contained in the well-known lines of Seneca's Medea:

'Venient annis sæcula,' &c.

Although, when regarded as a mere poetical vagary, it has not the weight which belongs to more serious suggestions of similar import, in the writings of Aristotle and Strabo. The various allusions in the ancient classic writers to an undiscovered world form the subject of an elaborate essay in the Memorias da Acad. Real das Scienças de Lisboa, (tom. v. pp. 101–112,) and are embodied, in much greater detail, in the first section of Humboldt's Histoire de la Géographie du Nouveau Continent: a work in which the author, with his usual acuteness, has successfully applied the vast stores of his erudition and experience to the illustration of many interesting points connected with the discovery of the New World and the personal history of Columbus."—*Hist. of the Reign of Ferd. and Isabella*, 11th ed., Bost., 1856, ii. 116–117, n.

Mr. Prescott remarks in the text:

"A proof of this popular belief occurs in a curious passage of the Morgante Maggiore of the Florentine poet Pulci, a man of letters, but not distinguished for scientific attainments beyond his day. The passage is remarkable, independently of the cosmographical knowledge it implies, for its allusion to phenomena in physical science not established till more than a century later. The devil, alluding to the vulgar supposition respecting the Pillars of Hercules, thus addresses his companion Rinaldo:

"'Know that this theory is false: his bark
The daring mariner shall urge far o'er
The western wave, a smooth and level plain,
Albeit the earth is fashioned like a wheel.
Man was in ancient days of grosser mould,
And Hercules might blush to learn how far
Beyond the limits he had vainly set
The dullest sea-boat soon shall wing her way.
Men shall descry another hemisphere,
Since to one common centre all things tend;
So earth, by curious mystery divine,
Well balanced, hangs amid the starry spheres.
At our Antipodes are cities, states,
And thronged empires, never divined of yore.
But see, the Sun speeds on his western path
To glad the nations with expected light.'

PULCI: *Morgante Maggiore*, *canto* 25, *st.* 229, 230."

"I have used blank verse [proceeds Mr. Prescott, in a note] as affording facility for a more literal version than the corresponding *ottava rima* of the original. This passage of Pulci, which has not fallen under the notice of Humboldt, or any other writer on the same subject whom I have consulted, affords probably the most circumstantial prediction that is to be found of the existence of a western world. Dante, two centuries before, had intimated more vaguely his belief in an undiscovered quarter of the globe:

De' vostri sensi ch' è del rimanente,
No vogliate negar l'esperienza,
Diretro al sol, del mondo senza gente.'
Inferno, cant. 26, *v.* 115."—*Ubi Supra*, 117–118, 118, n.

We happen to have lying on our table a notice of a work which should not be neglected by the collector of American History, (a large class among our friends in Boston and New York,) and which we observe has not escaped the researches of Mr. Irving (Hist. of Columbus) or of Mr. Prescott (Hist. of Ferdinand and Isabella). It is entitled Raccolta del Documento Originale e inediti spettante a Cristoforo Colombo alla Scoperta ed al Governo dell' America, Genoa, 1823, 4to. An invaluable collection of authentic remains, letters, memorials, &c., of the great navigator, with a learned introduction by Prof. Spotorno.

An English translation of this work was issued in the same year (1 vol. 8vo. pp. 159 and 255) in London. A notice of this collection will be found in Rich's Bibl. Amer. Nova, ii. 152, 155; N. Amer. Rev., xviii. 415–417, April, 1824, by Jared Sparks;) Ibid., xxi. 398–429, Oct. 1825. The Coleccion de los Viages y Descubrimientos de Don Martin Fernandez de Navarrete, Madrid, 1825, 2 vols. 4to, (3d vol., 1829, 4to,) to which we have already referred, will of course be found in the American department of the collector's Library. Those who are still ignorant of the value of this treasury, and the eminent services of its erudite compiler to the important cause of historical research, must consult Prescott's Mexico, 23d ed., 1855, Pref., vi.–vii.; his Ferd. and Isabella, 11th ed., 1856, Pref., v., and vol. ii., 133–134, 507, n.; his Peru, ed. 1855, Pref., vi.–vii., vol. ii., 76; Irving's Columbus and his Companions, ed. 1848, i., Pref., 13–18, iii., Introduc., xv. See also a review of Navarrete's Coleccion,—

written by Caleb Cushing, of Massachusetts, a ripe scholar,—in the N. Amer. Rev., xxiv. 265–294, April, 1827.

"His great work, Coleccion de los Viages y Descubrimientos," remarks Mr. Prescott, "although far from being completed after the original plan of its author, is of inestimable service to the historian."—*Peru, Pref.*, vii.

Perhaps we have already lingered sufficiently long on the threshold of our subject,—the citation of opinions respecting Irving's History of Columbus; but we must not pass on without commending to our reader a notice in the N. Amer. Rev., xliii. 43–52, July, 1836, (by J. L. Kingsley,) of the Italian Jesuit Ubertino Carrara's Latin epic on the Discovery of America, entitled Columbus, first published in 1715, at Rome. The poet thus announces his subject:

> "Primus ab Europâ, Solis qui viserit urnam,
> Parque prophanatum velis mare, maxima regna
> Regibus Hispanis, orbemque adjecerit orbi,
> Sit mihi materies operis."—*Lib.* i. 1.

We recently cut the following notice from some paper of the day:

"*Chart of Columbus.*—An old picture-dealer has lately sold to the Spanish Government, for 4,000 fr., the chart which the pilot of Columbus, Juan de la Cossa, used in his Voyage to the New World. It was formerly in one of the public libraries of Spain; and, when the galleries and churches of that country were ravaged by Marshal Soult, it fell into his hands, with the Conception, by Murillo, and various other spoils."

In the adduction of opinions respecting the manner in which Mr. Irving has acquitted himself in the responsible office of the biographer of the Great Admiral, with whom can we so properly

begin as with that eminent scholar to whose researches Mr. Irving and the world at large are so much indebted for all that we *know* of the illustrious Genoese? And here we are greatly pleased in being able to quote in evidence the most unqualified commendation of Mr. Irving's labors, which eulogy we are the more rejoiced to find from the certainty that if the opinion made as much against, as it fortunately does for, the historian's reputation, it would not be withheld from our readers. Our duty is neither to bury Cæsars nor to praise them, but rather to faithfully chronicle the recorded decisions of the great judges of literary jurisprudence. M. Navarrete may well be supposed to have entertained a natural anxiety that the copious collections for the illustration of the Life of Columbus which he had brought together, at the price of so many days and nights of persevering industry and careful research, should be faithfully made known to those who could only enjoy them in an English dress. Indeed, as we have seen in a preceding page, nothing more was originally contemplated by Mr. Everett than a translation by Irving of Navarrete's Coleccion. But, fortunately for the cause of letters, Mr. Irving determined upon a more comprehensive undertaking:

"On considering the matter more maturely [he remarks], I perceived that, although there were many books, in various languages, relative to Columbus, they all contained limited and incomplete accounts of his life and voyages; while numerous valuable tracts on the subject existed only in manuscript or in the form of letters, journals, and public muniments. It appeared to me that a history faithfully digested from these various materials was a desideratum in literature, and would be a more satisfactory occupation to myself, and a more acceptable work to my country, than the translation I had contemplated."—Madrid, 1827: *Pref. to 1st edit. Life of Columbus.*

The work was completed, and this decisive seal to its excellence was impressed by the learned Navarrete himself:

"Yo me complazeo en que los documentos y noticias que publicó en mi coleccion sobre los primeros acontecimientos de la historia de América hayan recaido en manos tan hábiles para apreciar su autenticidad, para examinarlas con crítica, y propagarlas por todos partes, echando los fundamentos de la verdad que hasta ahora há sido tan adulterada por los escritores parciales ó sistemáticos."—*From a Letter dated Madrid*, April 1, 1831.

The same distinguished authority, in the Introduction to the 3d volume of his Collection of Spanish Voyages, after adducing a number of testimonials to the usefulness of the two first volumes (1825, 4to), remarks:

"Insigne prueba de esto mismo acaba de darnos el Señor Washington Irving en la Historia de la Vida y de los Viages de Cristóbal Colon que ha publicado con una aceptacion tan general como bien merecida. Digimos en nuestra introduccion (1, §56, pag. lxxxii.) que no nos proponiamos escribir la historia de aquel almirante, sino publicar noticias y materiales para que se escribiese con veracidad, y es una fortuna que el primero que se haya aprovechado de ellas sea un literato juicioso y erúdito, conocido ya en su patria y en Europa por otras obras apreciables. Colocado en Madrid, exento de las rwalidades que han dominado entre algunas naciones Europeas sobre Colon y sus descubrimientos; con la proporcion de examinar excelentes libros y preciosos manuscritos, de tratar á personas instruidas en estas materias, y teniendo siempre á la mano los autenticos documentos que acabamos de publicar, ha logrado dar á su historia aquella extension, imparcialidad, y exactitud que la hacen muy superior á las de los escritores que le precedieron. Agrégase á esto, su metódico, arreglo, y conveniente distribucion; su estilo animado, puro, y elegante; la noticia de varias personages que intervenieron de los sucesos de Colon, y el exámen de varias cuestiones en que luce

siempre la mas sana crítica, la erudicion y buen gusto."—*Prologo al tomo* iii., Madrid, 1829, 4to.

It is proper that we should next quote the verdict of Mr. Alexander H. Everett,—so intimately connected with the incep tion of this great enterprise,—one of the ripest scholars that America has yet produced, and a critic of too much candor to permit his own interest in the work or his friendship for the author to either influence his judgment or qualify its expression:

"This is one of those works which are at the same time the delight of readers and the despair of critics It is as nearly perfect as any work well can be; and there is therefore little or nothing left for the reviewer but to write at the bottom of every page, as Voltaire said he should be obliged to do, if he published a commentary on Racine, Pulchré! bene! optimé! . . . He has at length filled up the void that before existed, in this respect, in the literature of the world, and produced a work which will fully satisfy the public and supersede the necessity of any future labors in the same field. While we venture to predict that the adventures of Columbus will hereafter be read only in the work of Mr. Irving, we cannot but think it a beautiful coincidence that the task of duly celebrating the achievements of the discoverer of our continent should have been reserved for one of its inhabitants; and that the earliest professed author of first-rate talent who appeared among us should have devoted one of his most important and finished works to this pious purpose.

> 'Such honors Ilion to her hero paid,
> And peaceful slept the mighty Hector's shade.'

For the particular kind of historical writing in which Mr. Irving is fitted to labor and excel, the Life of Columbus is undoubtedly one of the very best—perhaps we might say, without the fear of mistake, the very best—subject afforded by the annals of the world. . . . In treating this happy and splendid subject, Mr.

Irving has brought out the full force of his genius, as far as a just regard for the principles of historical writing would admit." —*N. Amer. Rev.*, xxviii. 103, 128, 129, Jan. 1829.

The verdict of the brilliant historian of the Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella—who has so greatly distinguished himself by his researches in the same field of historical investigation as that in which Mr. Irving gleaned so abundant a harvest—must have been awaited by the latter with no little anxiety. In a notice of the publication of the Coleccion of Señor Navarrete, to which we have frequently referred, Mr. Prescott remarks:

"Fortunately, Mr. Irving's visit to Spain at this period enabled the world to derive the full benefit of Señor Navarrete's researches, by presenting their results in connection with whatever had been before known of Columbus, in the lucid and attractive form which engages the interest of every reader. It would seem highly proper that the fortunes of the discoverer of America should engage the pen of an inhabitant of her most favored and enlightened region; and it is unnecessary to add, that the task has been executed in a manner which must secure to the historian a share in the imperishable renown of his subject."—*Ferd. and Isabella*, 11th ed., 1856, ii. 133.

"It is not necessary to pursue the track of the illustrious voyager whose career, forming the most brilliant episode to the history of the present reign, has been so recently traced by a hand which few will care to follow."—*Ibid.*, ii. 465–466. See also 482–483, n.

"The noblest monument to the memory of Columbus."—*Ibid.*, ii. 509.

"I will only remark, in conclusion of this too prolix discussion about myself, that, while making my tortoise-like progress, I saw what I had fondly looked upon as my own ground (having indeed lain unmolested by any other invader for so many ages)

suddenly entered, and in part occupied, by one of my countrymen. I allude to Mr. Irving's History of Columbus and Chronicle of Granada; the subjects of which, although covering but a small part of my whole plan, form certainly two of its most brilliant portions. Now, alas! if not devoid of interest, they are at least stripped of the charm of novelty. For what eye has not been attracted to the spot on which the light of that writer's genius has not fallen?"—*Ibid.*, i., Pref., xi.–xii.

In his Preface to the History of the Conquest of Mexico, Mr. Prescott, referring to the passage just quoted, notices it as a "singular chance," that, after collecting the materials for his last-named work, he found himself "unconsciously taking up ground which Mr. Irving was preparing to occupy." But we have already noticed this fact in our Life of CHARLES JAMES FOX, p. 624 of this Dictionary, to which the reader is referred. We had intended to quote other comments of Mr. Prescott's upon Irving's History of Columbus, but, as our article already lengthens beyond our intended limits, we must be content to refer the reader to the Preface to Mexico, ix., x.; Ibid., iii. 252, n.; Prescott's review of Irving's Chronicle of the Conquest of Granada, in N. Amer. Rev., xxix. 293–314, Oct. 1829. See also W. H. Gardiner's review of Prescott's Ferd. and Isabella, in N. Amer. Rev., xlvi. 203–291, Jan. 1838,—Prescott and Irving Compared, &c.

We proceed with our quotations; but they must be brief:

"This is on the whole an excellent book; and we venture to anticipate that it will be an enduring one. Neither do we hazard this prediction lightly, or without a full consciousness of all it implies. . . . For we mean, not merely that the book will be familiarly known and referred to some twenty or thirty years hence, and will pass in solid binding into every considerable col-

lection; but that it will supersede all former works on the same subject, and never be itself superseded."—LORD JEFFREY: *Edin. Rev.*, xlviii. 1–32, Sept. 1828.

"When he writes the History of Columbus, you see him weighing doubtful facts in the scales of a golden criticism. You behold him laden with the manuscript treasures of well-searched archives, and disposing the heterogeneous materials into a well-digested and instructive narration."—EDWARD EVERETT: *N. Amer. Rev.*, xli. 5, July, 1835.

"This work is written with the attractions of style and taste, and glowing description, which belong to the inspiration of the theme, and to the genius of the distinguished author."—CHANCELLOR KENT.

"A life of Columbus, authentic, clear, and animated in narration, graphic in its descriptive episodes, and sustained and finished in style. It is a permanent contribution to English as well as American literature; one which was greatly needed, and most appropriately supplied."—HENRY T. TUCKERMAN: *Sketch of Amer. Lit.*

"Since I have been here, I have contrived (by reading a half-hour in the night and a half-hour in the morning) to peruse the whole of Irving's Life of Columbus, in three volumes. It is quite an interesting work, though I think too much spread out by repetition of the same thoughts and descriptions. It is in all respects, however, reputable to the literature of our country."—JUDGE STORY: *Letter to Wm. W. Story*, Washington, Feb. 21, 1836.

Judge Story's comment reminds us of a similar one recorded by Tom Moore, and Cooper's ready retort:

"When Rogers, in talking of Washington Irving's Columbus, said, in his dry, significant way, 'It's rather *long*,' Cooper turned round on him, and said, sharply, 'That's a *short* criticism.'"—*Moore's Diary*, May 27, 1828.

"By the accession of his volumes, we have now the Biography of Columbus; as by Robertson's [History of America] we before had, and still have, the history. Mr. Irving's has been to me a very interesting production, sometimes marked with passages of great force and beauty; and it contains every thing respecting Columbus that can be wanted. He has had valuable sources of information, which he describes, and which were not within the reach of Robertson. Still, his volumes only show, as usual, the merits of Robertson. Upon looking over the historian's account once more, I see no mistakes, and no material omissions: in a concise and calm manner every particular of importance is intimated to the reader; and Mr. Irving has only told in the detail (but in a very interesting and agreeable manner, and I recommend his volumes to you) what our excellent historian had told before."—*Prof. Smyth's Lects. on Mod. Hist.*

There is another comparison between Robertson and Irving which it occurs to us to quote. It is one drawn by Lord Brougham in his Life of Dr. Robertson, and elicited by the account of the latter, in his History of America, of the first discovery of land by Columbus:

"If the word dramatic," remarks his lordship, "has been applied to this narrative, it has been advisedly chosen; because no one can doubt that with the most scrupulous regard to the truth, and even to the minute accuracy of his history, this composition has all the beauties of a striking poem. To judge of its merits in this respect, I will not compare or rather contrast it with the Histories of Oviedo or Herrera, or Ferdinand Columbus, or even with the far better composition of Dr. Campbell, or whoever wrote the history of the discovery in Harris's Bibliotheca Itinerarium, nor yet with the ambitious but worse-written narrative of Mr. Washington Irving in his Life and Voyages of Columbus," &c.

The noble critic then proceeds (in a note) to quote examples from both writers:

"It is no part of my intention to underrate the merits of this very popular author; but I speak of the manner in which he has treated the subject; and, coming after so great a master, it was not judicious in him to try for effect, instead of studying the chaste simplicity of his predecessors. These are a few of his expressions: The ships 'were ploughing the waves;' Columbus was 'wrapped in the shades of night;' he 'maintained an intense watch;' he 'ranged his eye along the dusky horizon;' he beheld 'suddenly a glimmering light.' Robertson had never thought of saying 'suddenly,' as knowing that light must of necessity be sudden. Then the light has 'passing gleams;' his feelings 'must have been tumultuous and intense;' contrary to the fact, and to the character of the man; 'the great mystery of the ocean was revealed;' 'what a bewildering crowd of conjectures thronged on his mind!' All this speculation of the writer to insure the effect, Dr. Robertson rejects as fatal to effect, and gives only what actually happened. Finally, he was possibly to find 'the morning dawn upon spicy groves, and glittering fanes, and gilded cities.' Surely no one can hesitate which of the two pictures to prefer. If the one is not absolutely tawdry, the other is assuredly more chaste. To compare the two pieces of workmanship is a good lesson, and may tend to cure a vitiated taste, (Book iii. Chap 3.) To take only one instance: 'About two hours before midnight, Columbus, standing on the forecastle, observed a light at a distance, and privately pointed it out to Pedro," &c. Thus Robertson. Irving says: 'Wrapped from observation in the shades of night, he maintained an intense and unremitting watch, ranging his eye along the dusky horizon. Suddenly, about ten o'clock, he thought he beheld a light glimmering at a distance.' Can any one doubt which of the two passages is the most striking,—the chaste and severe, or the ornamented and gaudy and meretricious? The account of Robertson makes the ships lie-to

all night. Irving either makes them lie-to, and afterwards go on sailing rapidly; or the lying-to was the night before, and they sailed quicker the nearer they came to land and in the dusk. The one makes them only see the shore after dawn; the other makes them see it two leagues off, in a dark night, at two in the morning, within the tropics."—*Lives of Men of Letters of the Time of George III.*, Lon. and Glasg., 1855, 265–266, n.*

In addition to the opinions cited above, see Lon. Month. Rev., cxv. 419; cxxiv. 244; Lon. Lit. Gaz., 1828, 65-67; Amer. Quar. Rev., iii. 173; ix. 163; South. Rev., ii. 1; vii. 214; South. Lit. Mess., vi. 569; Phila. Mus. of For. Lit., xiii. 23, from Lon. Weekly Rev.

7. Chronicle of the Conquest of Granada, from the MSS of Fray Antonio Agapida, 1829.

Perhaps we need hardly inform our readers that the worthy chronicler Fray is an imaginary personage.

"Mr. Irving's late publication, the Chronicle of the Conquest of Granada, has superseded all further necessity for poetry, and, unfortunately for me, for history. He has fully availed himself of all the picturesque and animating movements of this romantic era; and the reader who will take the trouble to compare his Chronicle with the present more prosaic and literal narrative [War of Granada, in Ferdinand and Isabella] will see how little he has been seduced from historic accuracy by the poetical aspect of his subject. The fictitious and romantic dress of his work has enabled him to make it the medium for reflecting more vividly the floating opinions and chimerical fancies of the age, while he has illuminated the picture with the dramatic brilliancy of coloring denied to sober history."—*Prescott's Ferd. and Isabella*, 11th ed., 1856, ii. 109, n.

* An article on Irving's works, in the "Christian Review," questions the justice of this criticism.

And see Mr. Prescott's review of the Chronicle, in N. Amer. Rev., xxix. 293–314; also in his Miscellanies, 1855, 88–122.

"A few works recently published in the United States have shed far more light [than Robertson's Charles V. and Watson's Philip II.] on the interior organization and intellectual culture of the Spanish nation. Such, for example, are the writings of Irving, whose gorgeous coloring reflects so clearly the chivalrous splendors of the fifteenth century."—*Ibid, Miscell.*, 125, 126, *q. v.*; (from N. Amer. Rev., July, 1837.)

Since Mr. Prescott's commendation was penned, the Chronicle has been brought more strictly within historical bounds, and in other respects also greatly improved.

"His Chronicle, at times, wears almost the air of romance; yet the story is authenticated by frequent reference to existing documents, proving that he has substantial foundation for his most extraordinary incidents."—*Lon. Quar. Rev.*, xliii. 55–80.

This article, explanatory of the work, and carefully avoiding commendation, was written for the Quarterly by Mr. Irving, at the request of Mr. John Murray. See also Lon. Month. Rev., cxix. 430; Amer. Month. Rev., v. 190; Lon. Lit. Gaz., 1829, 329.

8. Voyages of the Companions of Columbus, 1831.

See Lon. Month. Rev., N. S., xvi. 244; Lon. Gent. Mag., 1831, Pt. 1, 143; Prescott's Conq. of Peru, ed. 1855, i. 198, n.

9. The Alhambra. 1832.

"On the whole, we consider the work before us as equal in literary value to any of the others of the same class, with the exception of The Sketch-Book; and we should not be surprised if it were read as extensively as even that very popular produc-

tion. We hope to have it in our power, at no remote period, to announce a continuation of the series, which we are satisfied will bear, in the booksellers' phrase, several more volumes."—EDWARD EVERETT: *N. Amer. Rev.*, xxxv. 265–282, Oct. 1832.

A very suggestive remark occurs in the course of this review, which we once quoted in hope that it would bring forth fruit in its season:

"The period of the Moorish ascendancy is, perhaps, the most interesting in the annals of Spain, and would furnish a fit subject for a more methodical, extensive, and elaborate historical description than has yet been given of it in any language."

After the above was written, Mr. Prescott gave to the world his truly great work on the Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, in which we gave a graphic account of the decadence—or, more properly speaking, the extirpation—of the Moorish power in Spain; and he has not neglected eloquently to dilate upon the ancient glories of Cordova, Seville, and Granada in their best estate; but it did not enter into his plan to discuss this comprehensive theme in the extent which can alone do it justice. With the vast collections which he diligently made, the profound knowledge of the subject which the digestion of those materials had conferred, and the eloquence and force of his historic pen, what better subject could Mr. Prescott have had, than the one we ventured to suggest? But, before we entirely forget Mr. Irving in this episode, we must remember to notice that, whilst Mr. Everett ranks the Alhambra below The Sketch-Book, Mr. Prescott very happily refers to the volume as the "beautiful Spanish Sketch-Book, The Alhambra." See Ferd. and Isabella, 11th ed., 1856. ii. 100, n. See other reviews of the Alhambra, in the Westminster Rev., xvii. 132; Lon. Athen., 1832, 283; Amer.

Month. Rev., ii. 117. We must commend to the attention of those fond of the remains of Moorish antiquity, the splendid publication of Owen Jones, 1842–'45, entitled Illustrations of the Palace of the Alhambra. This superb work comprises the plans, elevations, sections, and details of the Alhambra, with a complete translation, by Pasqual de Gayangos, of the Arabic Inscriptions, and an Historical Notice of the Kings of Granada, from the Conquest of that City by the Arabs, to the Expulsion by the Moors; from Drawings taken on the spot, in the year 1834, by the late Jules Goury, and in 1834 and '37, by Owen Jones, Architect, 2 vols. fol., with 100 superb plates, 67 of which are magnificently executed in gold and colors; the remainder are elaborate engrav ings in outline; also fine wood-cuts in the text.

10. A Tour on the Prairies, 1835.

"To what class of compositions the present work belongs, we are hardly able to say. It can scarcely be called a book of travels, for there is too much painting of manners and scenery, and too little statistics; it is not a novel, for there is no story; and it is not a romance, for it is all true. It is a sort of sentimental journey, a romantic excursion, in which nearly all the elements of several different kinds of writing are beautifully and gaily blended into a production almost *sui generis*. . . . We are not sure that the passage in the book which we have read with greatest satisfaction is not that in which we are promised its continuation."—Edward Everett: *N. Amer. Rev.*, xli. 1–28, July, 1835.

See also Dubl. Univ. Mag., v. 555; and see reviews of The Crayon Miscellany, in South. Lit. Mess., i. 646; South. Lit. Jour., i. 8.

11. Astoria, Lon. 1836, 3 vols. cr. 8vo.; Phila., 1836, 2

vols. 8vo. See Rich's Bibl. Amer. Nova, ii. 283. In French, trans. by P. N. Grolier, 1839, 2 vols. 8vo.

"The whole work bears the impress of Mr. Irving's taste. A great variety of somewhat discordant materials is brought into a consistent whole, of which the parts have a due reference to each other; and some sketches of life and traits of humor come fresh from the pen of Geoffrey Crayon."—EDWARD EVERETT: *N. Amer. Rev.*, xliv. 200–237, Jan. 1837.

"I have read Astoria with great pleasure: it is a book to put in your library, as an entertaining, well-written—*very* well-written—account of savage life, on a most extensive scale. Ellice, who has just come from America, says Mr. Astor is worth £5,000,000 sterling; but Baring does not believe it, or is jealous perhaps."—*Rev. Sydney Smith to Sir George Philips*, Combe Foley, Dec. 22, 1836: *Smith's Letters and Corresp.*, 1855, vol. ii.

"The narrative, though told with the grace of the writer, is necessarily dry."—*Blackw. Mag.*, xli. 169, Feb. 1837, *q. v.*

We must not omit to quote the following well-merited tribute to a gentleman who, by his extensive circulation of sound literature for many years both in Europe and America, has honestly earned the title of a benefactor to the public mind. We refer to Mr. Irving's friend and publisher, Mr. George P. Putnam, of New York:

"We notice Astoria and the Tour on the Prairies now, only on account of their connection with our subject, and to commend the taste and enterprise of the publisher who has given to the reading world what has long been wanted,—a neat and uniform edition of all the writings of Mr. Irving, at a price which ought to obtain for them a wide circulation. These two works, which have all the pleasing characteristics of the author's style, appear very seasonably in a new edition."—PROF. FRANCIS BOWEN: *Ad-*

ventures on the Prairies, in N. Amer. Rev., lxix. 175–196, July, 1849.

We have not the slightest interest in the gains or losses of Mr. Putnam's copy-rights, but we have much in the moral and intellectual cultivation of the mind and heart of our countrymen and countrywomen, and therefore, as Lord Chesterfield said of the witty scintillations of the Dean of St. Patrick's, "He that hath any books in the three kingdoms hath those of Swift," so say we, He that hath any books in this great republic, should have those of Irving. As for those who have no books,—if any such there be,—in that household you may look for *ennui*, mental and physical languor, gossiping, dissipation, and "every evil work." As Sancho Panza conferred his hearty benediction upon the philanthropic inventor of sleep, so do we cordially revere the character of the literary Howard who founded the first family library. Of Sancho's favorite recreation he could only say, in the height of his somniferous pæan, that it "covered a man like a mantle;" but of good books we can testify that they nurture the soul with the food of angels.

But "to proceed with our subject," as the divines say, which has "naturally divided itself" into a hydra-headed discourse: other reviews of Astoria will be found in the Westminster Rev., xxvi. 318; Amer. Quar. Rev., xxi. 60; South. Lit. Mess., iii. 59. See also Franchère's Narrative of a Voyage to the North-west Coast of America, in 1811–'14, translated into English by J. V. Huntingdon, N. York, 1854, 12mo. This work contains comments upon some of the statements in Irving's Astoria.

12. The Adventures of Captain Bonneville, Lon. and Phila., 1837, 2 vols. 12mo.

"Washington Irving, after gleaning the romance of Europe, is now indefatigably laboring at the romance of America."—*Blackw. Mag.*, xlii. 64–67, July, 1837.

"These volumes are full of exciting incident, and, by reason of Mr. Irving's fine taste and attractive style, they possess the power and the charms of romance."—CHANCELLOR KENT.

13. OLIVER GOLDSMITH: A BIOGRAPHY, N. York, 1849, 12mo. This work we have already noticed in our Lives of JOHN FORSTER and OLIVER GOLDSMITH, in this Dictionary. See also Lon. Athen., 1849, 1151, 1152.

14. MAHOMET AND HIS SUCCESSORS, 1850, 2 vols. 12mo. See N. Amer. Rev., lxxi. 273; N. York Church Rev., iii. 401; South. Quar. Rev., xx. 173.

15. WOLFERT'S ROOST, 1855, 12mo. The publication of this volume elicited so many complimentary notices, that the New York publishers, Messrs. George P. Putnam & Co., issued a collection of them in pamphlet form of 24 pages. This little *brochure* should accompany every set of Irving's works. We give an extract from a notice which has escaped the vigilance of the publisher:

"We envy those who will now read these tales and sketches of character for the first time. Washington Irving is here, as he always is, equal to himself. He has the finish of our best writers; he has the equality and gentle humor of Addison and Goldsmith."—*Westminster Rev.*, April, 1855.

Another complimentary notice, also not in the pamphlet just referred to, appeared in the London New Monthly Magazine, and was copied into the Boston Living Age for Aug. 11, 1855. From a review of Wolfert's Roost, in the London Athenæum,

1855, 192, 193, we have already given an extract in our article on Ralph Waldo Emerson, to which the reader is referred.

16. The Life of George Washington, N. York, vol. i. 1855; vols. ii., iii. 1856; iv. 1857; v. 1859.

The limited space to which we are necessarily confined precludes the quotation of testimonies to the value of Mr. Irving's last and greatest production. The learned and long-continued researches of the most accurate of our State-Paper investigators (we need instance only Bancroft the historian and Everett the orator) attest the fidelity, the enthusiastic commendation of the lovers of pure and graceful English confess the charm of this instructive and delightful narrative. In the mean time, there can be no impropriety in our remarking, that the biographer well merited the gratitude of his countrymen for transporting the illustrious commander from the learned austerity of the Senate-Chamber, and the chilling dignity of Congressional Libraries, to the domestic familiarity of the parlor and winter-evening fireside of the cottage. Reviews of the early volumes of the Life of Washington will be found,—of vol. i., in Westminster Rev., Oct. 1855; vol. iii., Ibid., Oct. 1856; vols. i., ii., iii., Lon. Athenæum, Aug. 16, 1856; i., ii., iii., N. Amer. Rev., July, 1856; iv., Athen., Aug. 15, 1857; v., N. Amer. Rev., 1858.

As every thing concerning Washington Irving may be presumed to be interesting to the reader, we quote the following genealogical scrap from Dennistoun's Memoirs of Sir Robert Strange:

"John of Irwyn had landed possessions in the parish of

Holm, in Orkney, in 1438, when the county was still an appanage of the crown of Denmark and Norway. The Irvines of Sebay are very frequently mentioned in the times of Robert and Patrick Stewart, Earls of Orkney, and suffered very severely from the outrages of these rapacious nobles. They became extinct in the direct male line *tempore* Charles I.; but one collateral branch had immediately before settled in the island of Sanday, and another, the Irvines of Gairstay, in the island of Shapinshay. They lost the estate of Gairstay several generations back, and sank down into the condition of mere peasants, tenants of Quhome, where some of them reside at this day. I was there lately with Mr. Balfour, the proprietor of Shapinshay, who pointed out the old and modest house at Quhome where was born William Irvine, father of Washington Irving. Is it not somewhat singular that Sir Robert Strange and the author of Bracebridge Hall can be almost demonstrated of the same blood? I *guess* if Irving knew his pedigree could be traced step by step up to John Erwyn of 1438, he would readily claim and vindicate his Orcadian descent."

In addition to the authorities quoted in the course of this article, see also Homes of American Authors; Griswold's Prose Writers of America; Duyckinck's Cyc. of Amer. Lit.; Sketch of Irving, by H. T. Tuckerman; Miss Bremer's Impressions of America; Madden's Life of the Countess of Blessington; H. B. Wallace's Literary Criticisms; Edin. Rev., lxi. 23; Blackw. Mag., xiv. 564; Fraser's Mag., iv. 435, xii. 409; South. Quar. Rev., viii. 69; South. Lit. Mess., viii. 275; Amer. Whig Rev., xii. 602, (by J. B. Cobb;) Democratic Rev., ix. 573; Ibid., xxi. 488, (by P. H. Mayer;) United States Lit. Gaz., i. 177; N. York Eclec. Mag., xv. 412; Bost. Chris. Rev., xv. 203; Bost. Liv. Age, xliv. 723, (from Lon. Spectator.) We have already referred to Lord Byron's enthusiastic attachment to the writings and

character of Irving, (Life of Lord Byron in this Dictionary.) In a letter to Tom Moore, (Ravenna, July 5, 1821,) he remarks:

"I have had a friend of your Mr. Irving's, . . . and talked with him much of Irving, whose writings are my delight."

Again, under date of Sept. 24, 1821, he proposes to Murray, as one of the articles of their future correspondence, that he should not send him "any modern, or (as they are called) new, publications, in *English*, *whatsoever*, save and excepting any of Walter Scott, Crabbe, . . . Irving, (the American,)" &c.

"The names of Cooper, Channing, and Washington Irving," remarks the historian of Modern Europe, "amply demonstrate that the American soil is not wanting in genius of the most elevated and fascinating character."—Sir Archibald Alison: *Hist. of Europe*, 1789–1815, chap. lxxvi.

Mr. Stewart, of the American Navy, a friend of the present Emperor of France, tells us that, when in New York, Louis Napoleon declined to "appear in society," but adds:

"'There are, however,' remarked the prince, 'individuals resident in New York whose acquaintance I should be happy to make. Mr. Washington Irving is one. I have read his works, and admire him both as a writer and a man, and would take great pleasure in meeting him. Chancellor Kent is another. I have studied his Commentaries, think highly of them, and regard him as the first of your jurists. I would be happy to know him personally.'"

"He did make the acquaintance both of Mr. Irving and the Chancellor," continues Mr. Stewart, "and enjoyed the hospitality of the one at Sunnyside, and of the other at his residence in town."—*Letter of Rev. C. S. Stewart*, N. York, April 4, 1856, to the National Intelligencer.

How many can echo this remark of Napoleon!—"I admire

him both as a writer and as a man." It is indeed true, to borrow the words of an eminent American poet,

"Amiableness is so strongly marked in all Mr. Irving's writings, as never to let you forget the man; and the pleasure is doubled in the same manner as it is in lively conversation with one for whom you have a deep attachment and esteem. There is in it also the gayety and airiness of a light, pure spirit,—a fanciful playing with common things, and here and there beautiful touches, till the ludicrous becomes half-picturesque."—RICHARD H. DANA, SR.: *N. Amer. Rev.*, ix. 336, Sept. 1819.

If Mr. Dana were called upon to reaffirm the above, after forty years, and over the large pile of volumes which Mr. Irving has since given to the world, we are satisfied that he would do it without a moment's hesitation.

Many years ago, Edward Everett advised the young aspirant after literary distinction,

"If he wishes to study a style which possesses the characteristic beauties of Addison's, its ease, simplicity, and elegance, with greater accuracy, point, and spirit, let him give his days and nights to the volumes of Irving."—*N. Amer. Rev.*, xli. 4, July, 1835.

Young men have followed this advice most sedulously; and, indeed, a number of years before this counsel was penned, Mr. Irving's example had produced wonders:

"The great effect which it has produced is sufficiently evident already, in the number of good writers, in various forms of elegant literature, who have sprung up among us within the few years which have elapsed since the appearance of Mr. Irving, and who justify our preceding remark, that he may fairly be considered as the founder of a school."—ALEXANDER H. EVERETT: *N. Amer. Rev.*, xxviii. 11, Jan. 1829.

"Heretofore the essays of Washington Irving have offered a solitary specimen of the lighter literature of America, but we can now only regard Geoffrey Crayon as the founder of a class of writers, who follow closely in his footsteps."—*Court Journal: Notice of Stories of American Life, edited by Mary Russell Mitford.*

These remarks apply to both sides of the water. If an English reviewer desires to pay an especially handsome compliment to an author,—presuming that the case admits of a likeness being instituted at all,—he is very likely to be strongly reminded of the style of the author of The Sketch-Book. Let us cite some instances. The author of the article on George Colman and Bonnel Thornton's Connoisseur, in Chambers's Cyclopædia of English Literature, quotes a passage from an essay on Country Churches, "which," says the critic, "seems like a leaf from the note-book of Washington Irving." The reviewer in the London New Times remarks, of the author of Tales of a Voyager, that his "humor is of the spirit and quality of Washington Irving." The London Gentleman's Magazine says that in the perusal of The Journal of an Exile "we have frequently been reminded of the style and manner of The Sketch-Book,—the same pathos, the same originality of thought, the same felicity of expression." The London Monthly Review is so delighted with The Lucubrations of Major Humphrey Ravelin, that it declares that "many of the practised writers must *fall into the rear*, in competition with Major Ravelin, who must *stand muster* with Geoffrey Crayon." The London Spectator, in a notice of the Autobiography of Hugh Miller, remarks that "his style has a purity and elegance which reminds one of Irving and Goldsmith." One of the most distinguished of American authors is not disposed to think that any of Irving's imitators have equalled their master; at

least, this was his opinion at the time he penned the article from which we are about to quote:

"The candor with which the English have recognized Mr. Irving's literary merits is equally honorable to both parties, while his genius has experienced a still more unequivocal homage, in the countless imitations to which he has given rise; imitations whose uniform failure, notwithstanding all the appliances of accomplishment and talent, proves their model to be inimitable."—William H. Prescott: *N. Amer. Rev.*, xxxv. 191–192, July, 1832.

It is only proper to remark that Mr. Prescott has no reference, so far as we are aware, to either of the comparisons cited above. They were collected by ourselves, in the course of desultory reading. Washington Irving, indeed, can never be confounded with the host of his imitators, abroad or at home. His literary reputation rests upon sure foundations,—broad, deep, well settled, and immutable. As regards his own country,

"Other writers may no doubt arise in the course of time, who will exhibit in verse or prose a more commanding talent, and soar a still loftier flight in the empyrean sky of glory. Some western Homer, Shakspeare, Milton, Corneille, or Calderon, may irradiate our literary world with a flood of splendor that shall throw all other greatness into the shade. This, or something like it, may or may not happen; but, even if it should, it can never be disputed that the mild and beautiful genius of Mr. Irving was the Morning Star that led up the march of our heavenly host; and that he has a fair right, much fairer certainly than the great Mantuan, to assume the proud device, *Primus ego in Patriam.*"—Alexander H. Everett: *N. Amer. Rev.*, xxviii. 110, Jan. 1829.

As respects Mr. Irving's fame abroad, it is certainly true, as

Mr. Prescott remarks, that his merits have been—from the first, we will add—warmly acknowledged by British critics, and cordially appreciated by British readers. The circulation of his delightful volumes is by no means confined to the literary circles of the critics:

"To my poor cottage, rich only in printed paper," remarks an accomplished lady, "people all come to borrow books for themselves or for their children. Sometimes they make their own selections; sometimes, much against my will, they leave the choice to me; and in either case I know no books that are oftener lent than those that bear the pseudonym of Geoffrey Crayon. Few, very few, can show a long succession of volumes so pure, so graceful, and so varied as Mr. Irving."—*Mary Russell Mitford's Recollections of a Literary Life.*

Such a tribute as this must be peculiarly grateful to Mr. Irving. "It is excellent," says Isabella to the haughty duke, "to have a giant's strength;" but there is a rarer and more precious gift. To have the power, by the magic of the inspiration of genius, to elevate the mind, and to improve the heart,—to cause the rich to forget their covetousness and the poor their poverty,—to while away the tedious hours of declining age, of bodily pain, or mental disquietude,—this is indeed a gift more excellent than the giant's strength, the victor's laurel, or the conqueror's crown; and this honor has WASHINGTON IRVING,—the author of THE SKETCH-BOOK, and THE ALHAMBRA, the biographer of COLUMBUS and of WASHINGTON.

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